THE GUNS OF CAYUGA by CARL D. LANE

25¢

Adventure

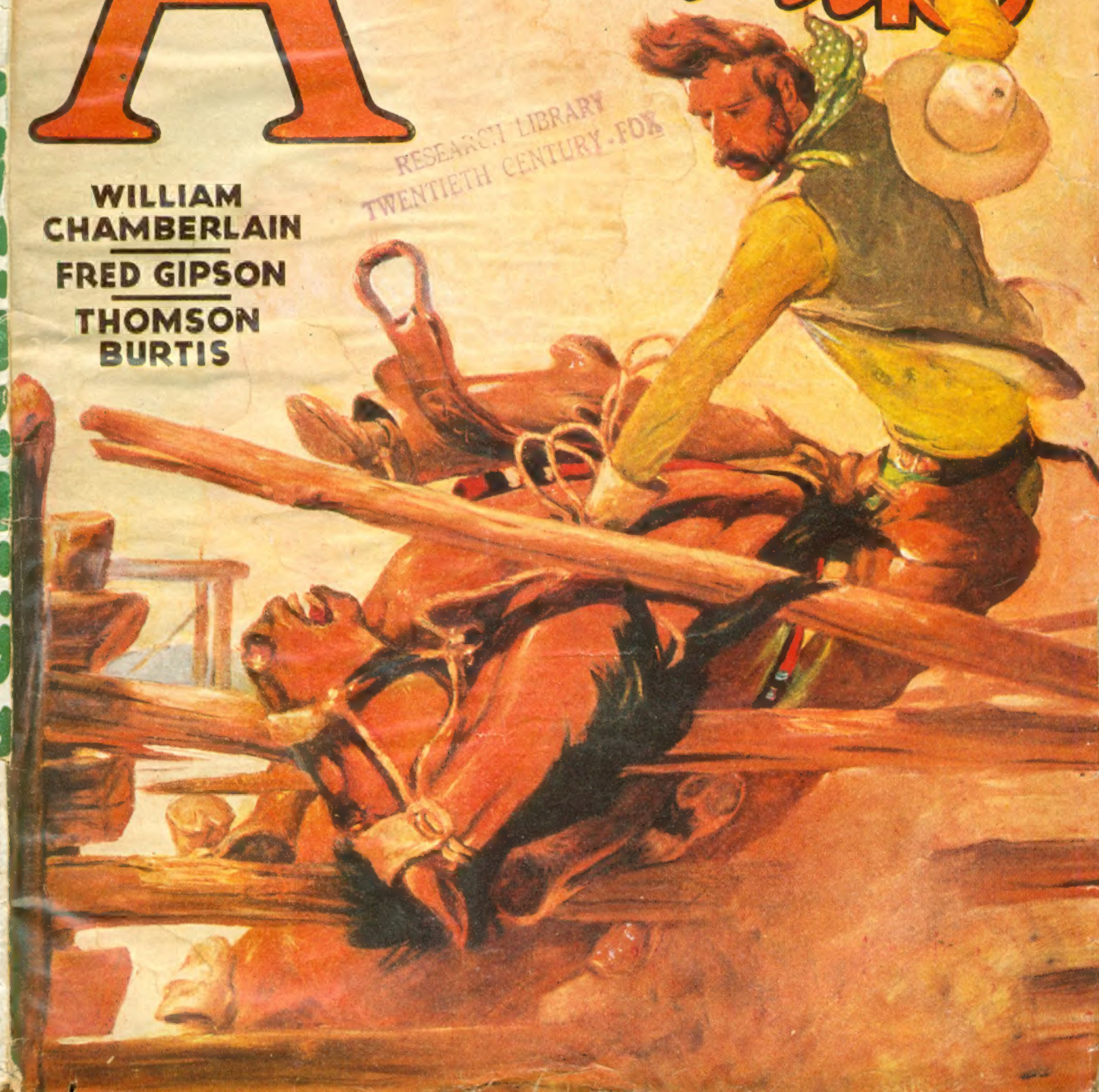
AUG.

RESEARCH LIBRARY
TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX

WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN

FRED GIPSON

THOMSON BURTIS



AUG. 1945 ADVENTURE 25 Cents

WRITE FOR INFORMATION ON DEALER FRANCHISES

KALAMAZOO
STOVES AND FURNACES
QUALITY LEADERS SINCE 1901

Buy More War Bonds

"So nice to come home to"—you and a Kalamazoo-cooked dinner. Look to Kalamazoo for great post war value—because of quantity production in new streamlined factories. Look to Kalamazoo for post war quality in Gas Ranges, Electric Ranges, Combination Gas, Oil and Coal Ranges, Coal and Wood Ranges, Heaters and Furnaces of all types. Whatever you do—"wait for a Kalamazoo."

KALAMAZOO STOVE & FURNACE CO.
501 Rochester Ave., Kalamazoo 6, Michigan

FREE—

New color book of kitchen ideas — plans, decorations, color schemes—mail coupon today!

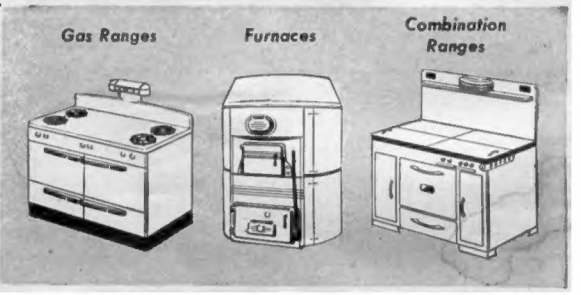
Kalamazoo Stove and Furnace Company
501 Rochester Ave., Kalamazoo 6, Michigan
Yes! Send my copy of "New Ideas for Your Kitchen" right away.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State.....



THOUSANDS NOW PLAY

who never thought they could!

Learned Quickly at Home

I didn't dream I could actually learn to play without a teacher. Now when I play for people they hardly believe that I learned to play so well in so short a time.
*H. C. S., Calif.

Plays at Dances

I have completed your course and your lessons have been most satisfactory. I can play all of the popular songs. I have also earned money playing at dances.
*E. N. J., New York.

Wouldn't Take $1000 for Course

The lessons are so simple that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course. *S. E. A., Kansas City, Mo.

Finding New Joy

I am finding a new joy that I never experienced before, for I have always wanted to play, but had given up hope until I heard of your course.
*C. S., Lucien, Okla.

You Can't Beat It

I am glad to tell anyone about the U. S. School. It is just what they say it is and they will do what they say they will. If you want to learn music you can't beat it!
*W. E. D., N. Mex.

*Actual pupils names on request. Pictures by professional models.

You, too, can play any instrument By this EASY A-B-C Method

YOU think it's difficult to learn music? That's what thousands of others have thought! Just like you, they long to play some instrument—the piano, violin, guitar, saxophone or other favorites. But they denied themselves the pleasure—because they thought it took months and years of tedious study to learn.

Learn In Spare Time at Home

And then they made an amazing discovery! They learned about a wonderful way to learn music at home—without a private teacher—without tedious study—and in a surprisingly short time. They wrote to the U. S. School of Music for the facts about this remarkable short-cut method. And the facts opened their eyes! They were amazed to find how easy it was to learn.

The result? Over 750-000 men and women have studied music at home this simple, A-B-C way. Now, all over the world, enthusiastic music-lovers are enjoying the thrilling satisfaction of creating their own music. They have found the key to good time, popularity and profit.

Costs Less Than 7c a Day

And that's what you can do, right now. Get the proof that you, too, can learn to play your favorite instrument—quickly, easily, in spare time at home for less than seven cents a day. Never mind if you have no musical knowledge, training or talent. Just read the fascinating booklet and Print and Picture sample that fully explain all about the famous U. S. School method. If interested tear out the coupon now, before you turn the page. U. S. School of Music 3678 Brunswick Bldg. New York 10, N. Y. Largest school of its kind in the world. (47th year)

FREE!
Print and Picture Sample

NOTICE
Please don't confuse the U. S. School of Music method with any system of teaching music "by ear" or by trick charts. Our method teaches you to play by actual notes — not by any trick or number system.

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
3678 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N.Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument checked below. Please send me your free illustrated booklet "How to Learn Music at Home," and your free Print and Picture Sample.

Piano	Plain Accordion	Clarinet	Practical Finger Control
Guitar	Saxophone	Trombone	
Hawaiian Guitar	Trumpet, Cornet	Flute	Piccolo
Violin	Reed Organ	Modern Elementary Harmony	Mandolin
Piano Accordion	Tenor Banjo		
	Ukulele		

Have you
Name ..... Instrument? .....
(Please Print)

Address .....

City ..... State .....

Note: If you are under 16 years of age, parent must sign coupon.

SAVE 2c — STICK COUPON ON PENNY POSTCARD

◆ ◆ ◆ THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE WILL

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

Vol. 113, No. 4 for August, 1945 Best of New Stories

NOVELETTES

Ould Soldiers Never Die ..... WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN 10

No matter whin the war or what the weapon the breed goes on. Take Sergint Gregg Harney, f'rinstance. He was chasin' redskins hell f'r leather with a Sharps acrost the plains whin Gin'ral Miles was a pup, an' blastin' krauts with a bazooka in the Bastogne Bulge not more'n a few months back. It's a wonder the ould campaigner didn't git his fill of fightin' fifty years ago but of course he's Irish, so maybe that explains why he's not ready yet to trade his foxhole for a chair in the chimney corner.

The Guns of Cayuga ..... CARL D. LANE 62

They are neither legend nor fancy. They have boomed since before the days of the Indians and may very well be the thunder of the final Judgment Day, for they grow and strengthen every year. It has been said that the guns have maddened and maimed and killed and this must be so, for The Murthering Man certainly used their magic cannonade in an attempt to muffle his crime.

SHORT STORIES

The Lost Toes of Uncle Wiley ..... FRED GIPSON 34

When Uncle Wiley Creech let his chopping axe slip and cut three toes off his right foot it seemed like everybody in the country knew about it inside an hour. Before he got well the folks that came to comfort the injured man got away with a barrel of flour and a fattening hog and left winter rations mighty scarce around the place—but neighbors will be neighbors—particularly if they're poor relations.

Turn Away ..... DURAND KIEFER 48

Commander Michael Foley, U.S.N. was what might be called a perfectionist. One of those guys who're never satisfied. Five enemy ships for one of his own was just a muffed play to Mike—even though the admiral thought otherwise. An egg in his beer was what the man wanted and the odd thing is, he'll probably get it next time.

Charge of Mayhem ..... FRANKLIN GREGORY 55

It isn't always good policy to be an honest newspaper reporter. Collie Ives learned that after he phoned in his story on Mr. Saraswati and the vanishing shoeshine boy. He got fired the next day and hasn't been able to land another job since.

Published once a month by Popular Publications, 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois. Editorial and executive offices, 205 East Forty-second Street, New York City, 17, N. Y. Harry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice President and Treasurer. Entered as Second Class Matter, October 2, 1935, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Yearly subscription $2.50, two years $4.50, three years $6.50 in advance in the United States, its possessions and all countries that are members of the Pan-American Postal Union. $1.00 additional for all other foreign countries. Single copy, 25 cents. Subscription Dept., 205 East 42nd St., New York, 17, N. Y. Trade Mark registered.

Copyright, 1945, by Popular Publications, Inc. All rights reserved under Pan-American Copyright Convention.

Printed in U. S. A.

BE OUT ON AUGUST 10TH ◆◆◆

Fair Weather Skipper ..... STEVE HAIL 86
"Operations says it's plenty wet in the Islands," the Old Man remarked pleasantly. "Rain, mist, steam coming off the jungle like fog—" That was when Lieutenant O'Bryne turned pale under his tan, dropped his coffee cup and left the table. "Ought to be interesting duty, this," the engineering officer said. "Mention bad weather and the second in command falls in a faint. Wonder what he'll do when the rains really come."

The Hard Way ..... BURT SIMS 94
Like most other things chances can be taken two ways. Curtiss was an eager beaver when he got in the air and always took 'em hard. Major Rouge, on the other hand, was an exponent of the easy gamble. But together they managed to hit a pretty good average when they rode their Mustangs over Germany—even though they hated to admit it to each other once they were back on the ground again.

One In a Thousand ..... GIFF CHESHIRE 102
Steve Sandesty had seen many a river man with more muscle than sense try to pit his strength against flood water. He knew the crew of that runaway gasoline barge could never make it to shore by swimming—they didn't have a chance in a million. But it was a thousand-to-one shot they'd come through alive if they played it his way. And there were only split seconds left for them to decide how to bet.

THE SERIAL

New Guinea Gold (2nd of 3 parts) ..... THOMSON BURTIS 108
Deep into the Papuan hinterland—beseiged by hostile natives at every turn—Sinclair pilots the schooner *Susan* upriver on her gold-quest. Then, as they near the bullion cache, the tribal drums boom out and a craftier enemy than any head-hunter in that savage land takes a hand in the game.

FACT STORIES

Powder Man ..... NORMAN FLANDER 43
Dynamite is tricky stuff to handle. You can bounce it, beat it, burn it in your cookstove a hundred times and then the next time—*wham!* "You go old country—one minute!" is exactly the way to express it.

Cossack Correspondent ..... RUSSELL E. SMITH 79
"Will-'o-the-wisp of war writers" they called him, this Admirable Crichton of the newspaper fraternity, master of nine languages, superb horseman, crack shot and diplomat extraordinary. Meet Januarius Aloysius MacGahan—American's "first" war correspondent—who changed the map of Europe back in the '70s and whose birthday is a national holiday in the land he liberated.

DEPARTMENTS

The Camp-Fire ..... Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 6
Ask Adventure ..... Information you can't get elsewhere 134
Ask Adventure Experts ..... The men who furnish it 135
Lost Trails ..... Where old paths cross 142
The Trail Ahead ..... News of next month's issue 133

Cover painted for Adventure by Nick Eggenhofer
Kenneth S. White, Editor

IF YOUR COPY OF THIS MAGAZINE IS LATE—

We regret that, due to the difficulties of wartime transportation, your *Adventure* may sometimes be a little late in reaching you. If this should happen, your patience will be appreciated. Please do not write complaining of the delay. It occurs after the magazine leaves our offices and is caused by conditions beyond our control.

—The Publishers.

THE CAMP-FIRE

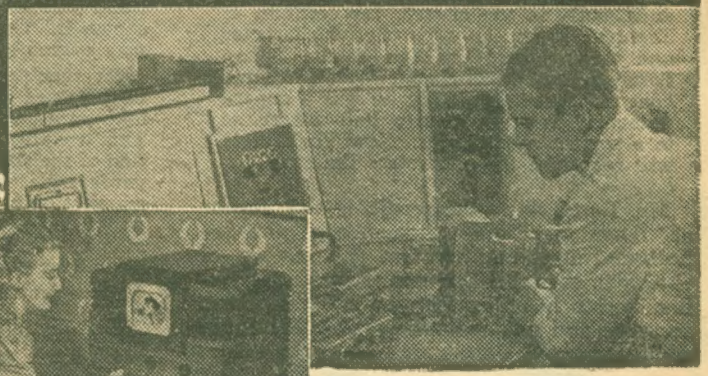
Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

WHEN Carl D. Lane's "The Guns of Cayuga" arrived at our desk we put aside the current-war combat story we'd been reading, prepared to shift from a Pacific battle background where Yank marines were devastating an assortment of Jap pill boxes to the red-coat-and-Indian-infested wilderness of upper New York State in Revolutionary times. We knew that Author Lane was engaged in completing an historical novel and assumed from its title that this new novelette was an excerpt from the book or possibly a by-product of the research he'd been doing—an episode not to be included in the novel but probably set in the same period. It was certainly a surprise (but no disappointment, we hasten to add) to find "The Guns—" turning into a modern murder mystery without a single parallel to the work or period in which we thought Lane had been steeping himself. About this most recent concoction from his happily versatile typewriter the author writes—

> You might be interested to know that the lake legends are not fiction at all. These yarns and tales have been going the rounds of the Finger Lake countryside since that famous one about the serpent which lay across New York State from Niagara to the Hudson. You remember how Manitou severed this line between the Iroquois and Algonquins by slicing the serpent with his sword (the marks of which are the present five Finger Lakes) and how the serpent's tail slithered away to make the Hudson Valley and the jaws snapped in agony and chewed out the Niagara Gorge. These tales must have started then . . . for the lake guns are found in early Indian legend.
>
> I ran across them in a queer way. In Connecticut, near to where I lived a good part of my life, is Moodus Lake. I've heard the "Moodus Guns" here often; and a few legends about them also, including the inevitable one about the Indian maid and the white canoe and the subterranean cavern. Some years ago one of my pals became editor of the Cornell Alumni News and, while visiting him at Ithaca, I heard the unmistakable booming of lake guns. We were sailing on Cayuga at the time and Steve thought it was blasting or a thunder squall making up. We settled our argument by calling on a friend of his, Professor A. M. Drummond, of the Department of Speech and Drama, Cornell University—author of the regional folk play, "The Lake Guns of Seneca and Cayuga"—who at that time was just beginning his now famous researches into New York State legend, particularly those based on the Cardiff Giant. Professor Drummond stimulated my own interest and I soon found the folklore much richer and more complete than that of the Moodus section.
>
> Although I had toyed with the bare idea of a story in the background, it was not until I heard about the underground chan-

(Continued on page 8)

GET INTO RADIO ELECTRONICS & TELEVISION NOW!



Hundreds of Industries Need Radio and Television Men Now and for Great Future Demands

The man trained in electronics is wanted not only in Radio and Television, but in Aviation, Transportation, Communications, . . . in the designing, engineering and operation of hundreds of industries today and for years to come. Learn how great the field is for YOU...How you may GET INTO BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF. Mail the coupon now.

Send for FREE Lesson and Prove to Yourself How Quick and Easy You Get Ahead in Radio by the NEW

SHOP METHOD HOME TRAINING

Learn by Doing!

Use real Radio Equipment Furnished with your Course

Experience is the best teacher. You learn by experience with the exclusive National Shop-Method of Home Training—actually build many circuits and do experiments with the big kits of standard radio parts included in your training equipment at no extra cost to you.

Build a superheterodyne receiver. Make tests and conduct experiments that show you the why and how of electronics. Build an audio oscillator, signal generators and other instruments with the parts and supplies included in your course.

"F.M." Means Future Money

Frequency Modulation (F.M.) is here to stay. Thousands of F. M. licenses have been granted by the government F. C. C. all over the country. Learn what this means to you.

Get ready for TELEVISION. Get your share of the RADIO SERVICE Business. Here is a sensationally improved way for you to get the right training—a thoroughly proved system whereby you study in spare time—odd hours, even minutes—and have the advantage of actual shop experience behind you.

This exclusive shop method of home training comes to you right from one of the world's greatest vocational educational centers—the resident training shops and experimental laboratories of National Schools. It is the sound, practical training based on actual experience of qualified instructors and engineers who have prepared thousands of National graduates now employed in the radio industry.

It is up-to-date—matches the progress constantly being made in modern radio, television and electronics. It is time tested. National Schools has been training men for higher pay and greater opportunity for more than a third of a century. Fill out and mail the coupon below for details.

Shop Method Training Wins Good Jobs

"My latest offer was $5,800.00 as Radio Photo Engineer . . . but I'm doing well where I am now engaged. I am deeply indebted to National." — Joseph Grumich, Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey.

"Due to my training at National I was selected to instruct in the laboratory work of Navy and Marines."—S. R. Wright, Blackfoot, Idaho.

"I believe National offers the best course to be had. . . . Keep up the good work."—O. K. Ivey, Washington, D. C.

Read what hundreds of other enthusiastic students have written about National Training. Send in your coupon today.

Be Sure In Post-War

Now, right now, is the time to prepare for SUCCESS AND SECURITY in the great expansion after the war. The field is wide open. Trained men will get the preference in the broadcasting stations—in industry—will make quick progress with small capital in their own business. Soldiers, sailors and marines make use of your free time to get ready for the future. Study while still in uniform. Thousands of men in the armed forces have trained at National Schools under U. S. Government sponsorship.

See for Yourself

Now, right now, is the time to grasp the great opportunity of today—a successful career for tomorrow. Get into the big money, rapid advancement, a position of importance, A BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN. The industry is crying for trained men everywhere. A rapidly expanding business—probably the greatest in industrial history—holds out the promise of a rich future—prosperous security. But to win it you must be ready. Well-trained men ONLY are wanted.

Examine the National Shop Method of Home Training carefully. Be convinced. Study the lesson we will send you FREE. No obligation of any sort. Fill out the coupon and mail it today.

GET THESE 2 BIG BOOKS FREE!

Learn for yourself just how easy this SHOP METHOD HOME TRAINING gives you the practical, down-to-earth experience you can never get from theory alone.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

LOS ANGELES 37, CALIFORNIA EST. 1905

MAIL OPPORTUNITY COUPON FOR QUICK ACTION

National Schools, Dept. 8-PP
4000 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles 37, California
(Mail in envelope or paste on penny post card)

Mail me FREE the two books mentioned in your ad including a sample lesson of your course. I understand no salesman will call on me.

NAME..... AGE.....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... STATE.....
Include your zone number

(Continued from page 6)

nel connecting the two lakes that I visualized a rough plot structure. From there on it was all fun . . . and I could have gone on for chapters more in the usual detective formula. I finally wrote it in about three days early this year.

I freely used the character names and some of the recognized "facts" of the legends, such as the cavern, the location at Taghonic Point, Tauggy's playful character and the sinister Old Man of the Lakes. Spinkster John was changed into a steamboat engineer. Originally he was a supernumerary ranging from a half-wit rustic to a sort of court jester. New York State will recognize the characters I'm sure.

Mr. Lane, you will recall, is the author of "American Paddle Steamboats," the definitive reference work on the history of that type of craft. For our artist's information and to help him get his illustrations as accurate and authentic as possible Mr. Lane added—

The lake boats were paddlers, rather primitive things with two decks and much evidence of barn architecture in the superstructure.

The *Lady of the Lakes* in my steamboat book—she plied Lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire—is the general type . . . but to be the *Aurora* she should have a cowpen for'ard, spark guards on her stack and probably lightning rods and hex signs on her paddle boxes.

Should your artist desire additional information on Cayuga steamboats and the old Ithaca wharves he might get in touch with Roy C. McHenry of Binghamton, N. Y. He is a retired judge, a steamboat fan and knows the lake boat history perhaps better than anyone else.

Artist Chickering promptly availed himself of Author Lane's suggestion and queried Judge McHenry, enclosing a preliminary pencil sketch of the *Aurora* for checking purposes. The following detailed and helpful reply from Binghamton was much appreciated for it enabled our illustrator to get a much more accurate portrait of the paddleboat than he could have otherwise. Judge McHenry wrote in part—

I presume that the prototype of the *Aurora* was the *Frontenac*, the last paddle steamboat on Cayuga Lake, which was burned, near Cayuga village, near the foot of the lake, in 1907. She had been running on the lake for many years. Judging from her cabin decorations, she must have been built before the Civil War.

Your sketch shows an open forward deck. On the *Frontenac*, the upper deck extended clear to the bow, which was a popular place for passengers in good weather. It was supported by stanchions. At the foot of the jack staff was a short diagonal staff, inclining upward, which was a peculiarity of Finger Lake boats, and was used for taking bearing to lay the course between landings.

The stack, as I remember it, was about a third shorter than in your sketch and there was no spark arrestor. I don't remember any lightning rods. The walking beam was somewhat higher than you have shown it. The *Frontenac* had a low pressure engine and a mezzo soprano whistle.

On reaching the head of the lake, the boat passed a lighthouse set out into the lake on a causeway, and entered the Inlet. This was the most difficult piece of navigation of the trip, as the Inlet is not over fifty yards wide anywhere and winds through marshes on each side for over a mile, to the wharf, a short distance below the railroad station. Canal boats were docked below the steamboat wharf on either side.

Since around 1870, there has been a railroad along the east shore of the lake for nearly its whole length, so I don't suppose many cattle were carried by the steamboats after that.

The wharves at the various lake landings were built on piling. They had to be substantial, as the waves run pretty high when there is a good north or south wind.

The canal boats from the Montezuma extension of the Erie Canal entered the lake near Cayuga village. From there they were towed up the lake if bound for Ithaca or intermediate ports. If bound for Seneca Lake, they turned into the Seneca-Cayuga Canal without entering Cayuga Lake and continued on west through Seneca Falls and Waterloo to Seneca Lake opposite Geneva.

There were some steam canal boats which came up Cayuga Lake. In case you wish to put one in the background of an illustration, they were built like the ordinary type, with round bows. The engine was placed aft, with a stubby smoke stack not much larger than a stove pipe, and the propeller was usually half out of water to avoid washing the canal banks.

There was no canal at Ithaca. The shores on both sides of the lake for twenty miles or so are very precipitous.

There was a steamboat called the *Cayuga* which ran on the lake during the 80's and 90's. I never saw her but understand she was about the size of the *Frontenac* and made the trip in the opposite direction, starting from Cayuga when the *Frontenac* left Ithaca and vice versa. Each boat made one trip each way, daily.

The *Frontenac's* main-deck superstructure, forward of the engine, finished in a semi-circle. The wood work had considerable carving on it.

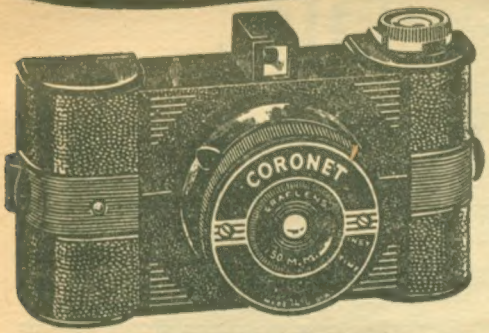
The *Frontenac* and *Cayuga* burned coal.

Thank you again, Judge, and we hope you approve of the illustration!

(Continued on page 139)

While Supply Lasts!

The CAMERA BARGAIN of a Lifetime!



LOOK At These Features

- ★ Takes Excellent Full Color Pictures Indoors or Outdoors
- ★ Genuine Graf Lens
- ★ Extremely Simple to Operate
- ★ Level View Finder
- ★ Takes 16 Pictures On Any Standard Number 127 Film
- ★ Fine Quality Precision Construction

Now Only **$3.98** CARRYING CASE FREE!

The Ideal Gift For Mother, Dad, Sis or Brother

★

Sold on Money-Back "No Risk" Guarantee of Satisfaction

This Handsome **CARRYING CASE *FREE**

*Yes, you get this handsomely tailored, attractive carrying case absolutely FREE postpaid if you send $3.98 with order.

DON'T PASS UP THIS SENSATIONAL SCOOP VALUE!

Imagine getting a genuine Coronet Candid Camera for only $3.98 in the face of one of the most drastic camera shortages in our nation's history! And please don't let our low close-out price lead you to believe that this is "just another cheap camera." To the contrary, it's a precision made instrument created by one of the largest camera manufacturers in the world. Yes our Coronet Candid Camera looks, acts and performs like many cameras costing as high as ten dollars in peace time, and possesses many features you have to see to appreciate. We absolutely guarantee the Coronet to take beautiful, clear, sharp pictures in either color or black and white — pictures that will thrill you or your money back. All we ask is that you act quickly because the quantity is limited and it's "first come — first served." So order at once and avoid disappointment later. DO IT NOW AND GET HANDSOME CARRYING CASE FREE!

Limited Supply—Order Before Sell-Out

Exquisite 30-Piece Set of Fine QUALITY SILVER PLATE

Richly Plated With Pure Silver on Strongly Reinforced Steel Base

Sale Price **$9.95** TAX FREE

A Luxurious Treasure At A Thrilling Low Bargain Price

With fine tableware hard to get at any price, imagine getting an exquisite 30-piece Superb Quality set plated with pure silver on reinforced steel base—a bonafide $14.95 value—for only $9.95 . . . glorious silverplate richly nested in a luxurious non-tarnish chest. Yes, if you need Silverware; and know a bargain when you see one—don't put off sending in your order for this beautiful and valuable 30-piece set of "Lady Leone" silverplate of sparkling beauty. Includes 6 knives, 6 forks, 6 soup spoons, 12 teaspoons. A set you'll be proud to own, proud to give as a gift.

★ **FREE Silver Polishing Cloth**

SEND NO MONEY—Just pay postman only $9.95 plus postal charges when he delivers your set. Or enclose $9.95 and save postal charges and we'll send your set and include Free Silver Polishing Cloth postpaid. Your ABSOLUTE SATISFACTION GUARANTEED or money back.

★

If you send $9.95 with your order we'll include a Silver Polishing Cloth Free and prepay all charges besides.

You save postage and C.O.D. fee by enclosing payment with order. Same money-back guarantee of satisfaction.

Includes ANTI-TARNISH CABINET

MAIL THIS COUPON FOR SILVER PLATE

NATIONAL NOVELTIES—Dept. S-11
608 South Dearborn Street—Chicago 5, Ill.

Please rush 30-piece set of Superb quality, Silver-Plate complete with Anti-Tarnish Chest. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded if purchase returned in ten days.

CHECK ONE

☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman $9.95 plus postage and C.O.D. charges. ☐ I am enclosing $9.95. Send postpaid and include FREE Polishing Cloth.

Check here ☐ if you prefer same sensational offer in Deluxe Quality DOUBLE-WEIGHT SILVER-PLATE for only $11.95 Tax Free.

CHECK ONE

☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postman $11.95 plus postage and C.O.D. charges. ☐ I am enclosing $11.95. Send postpaid and include FREE Polishing Cloth.

Name_____
Please Print Clearly.
Address_____
City_____ State_____

MAIL THIS COUPON FOR CAMERA

NATIONAL NOVELTIES—Dept. C-38
608 South Dearborn Street—Chicago 5, Ill.
(Please skip my camera order as indicated below.

CHECK ONE

☐ Send C.O.D.—I will pay postman $3.98 plus postage. ☐ Enclosed find $3.98 in full payment including Free Carrying Case as bonus for cash sale.

If you want us to include 4 rolls of high speed film (enough for 64 sharp pictures) for only $1 (includes all handling cost) CHECK BOX BELOW.

CHECK ONE

☐ Include 4 rolls of Film C.O.D.—I will pay postman $4.98 plus postage. ☐ Enclosed find $4.98 for 4 rolls of Film and Camera. Include Free Carrying Case as bonus

Name_____
Please Print Clearly
Address_____
City_____ State_____

OULD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE

By WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN

WELL, there is a story that Tim Mulcahy tells me one night when the two of us are setting up at Paddy Dolan's wake. Paddy Dolan has come to no good end through drinking wood alcohol, may his soul rest in peace, but that is neither here nor there. Anyway, it is a long and tiresome night and the story helps to pass it away. Furthermore, a man can believe it or not, just as he pleases.

It goes something like this:

IT IS on a Saturday when the Ould Nick is making his usual Saturday inspection. He has just finished with the furnaces—stopping now and then to turn over a major general of the line or a technician Grade Five or similar sinners so that they will brown even all around—and has gone out to his coal piles. These coal piles are the Ould Wan's pride and joy.

Well, he is sort of gloating over these coal

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER

Sitting on his pony at the edge of the wilderness is the meanest-looking Indian I ever hope to see. There are five others behind him. I try to holler but the words stick in my throat.

piles when he sees a sight which displeases him considerable. It is a runty little man with a cast to the left eye of him who is filling a sack at the best one of the Devil's coal piles.

"See here, me friend," the Ould Nick says, some put out, "what the devil do you mean by pilfering me best coal? I am a patient and understanding man but that I will not put up with."

The man cocks an eye at him and goes on shoveling coal into his sack. He says, "You will put up with it and like it or else you will see to it that your fireman keeps a decent heat under me griddle. 'Tis not me intention to lie about half frozen while you get fat upon the coal savings which you have mulcted out of your tenants, you ould skinflint!"

"So you are a tenant of mine, are you?" the Ould Wan asks him.

"I am that," the cockeyed man tells him.

Well, the Ould Wan is more and more displeased for, being a polite man himself, he does not care for tenants who are umbrageous such as the one who is helping himself to the coal pile. He looks down his nose and scratches himself with the point of his tail.

Finally he says, "I will not put up with you. Do you pack your things and get out—'tis not as though I did not have plenty waiting to take your place."

The little man grins nastily. "Kicking me out, are you?"

"I am that."

"You are not, me friend," the cockeyed man tells him. "Perhaps you have forgotten me lease—I will refer you to paragraph twenty-six A and dare you to try and break it."

Well, the Ould Wan groans because he knows that the little man has him there and there is nothing that he can do about that. He has had, so to speak, plenty of expert advice in drawing up leases and similar legal papers. Still, if this coal stealing is to become general, he will be a ruined man. He says as much to his chief of staff that evening.

"I am a poor man," he complains, "and me coal bills are something scandalous to see, the way it is. I will be bankrupt in a month if the word gets around that me tenants can help themselves to coal."

The chief of staff picks his teeth and nods. "The thing to do is to put a guard over them coal piles," he says. "That's the only way to stop it. I remember once when I was—"

"You have put your finger on it, Joe," the Ould Wan interrupts him excitedly. "A guard will do the trick. Do you dig me a good one immediate."

The chief of staff looks thoughtful. "Well," he says, "it ain't as easy as it sounds. Have you any suggestions as to where we will find one with the proper qualifications?"

Well, the Ould Wan runs over his list of clients on his fingers, taking them by profession, and mumbling to himself as he does so. As you can see, it is not an easy matter to find one who has had experience and who can be expected to keep his own fingers out of the coal as well.

Finally the Ould Wan says crossly, "I misdoubt that I would trust any of 'em. I am of a good mind to close up the business and retire. I am sick and tired of it anyway."

Well, the chief of staff has a good job which he does not wish to lose, so he thinks fast. "How about an ould soldier for the work?" he asks after a minute. "'Tis likely that he would have had the experience—soldiers putting in much of their time guarding prisoners on the garbage truck, paymaster majors and similar by-products of war. Furthermore, it is unlikely that he would be tempted by the coal since soldiers are notorious for neglecting to provide for rainy days and such associated vices of the ordinary citizen. What do you say we try one?"

The Ould Wan brightens up considerable. "What you have said makes a bit of sense, Joe," he admits. "Do you find one for me immediate."

It is maybe a week later when the Ould Wan calls his chief of staff in and the Ould Wan is in something of a huff because he has just come by the coal pile. The cockeyed man has been there, and half-filled his bag with good anthracite again. When the Ould Wan speaks to him he acts downright insolent.

So the Devil says testily, "Joe, how about that ould soldier that you were going to find to guard me coal piles?"

The chief of staff looks some embarrassed and rubs at his bald head. "To tell you the truth, Chief," he says finally, "I have looked the shop over and never an ould soldier have I been able to find. I am afraid we haven't got one in the house."

"A sorry business," the Ould Wan grumbles. "Well, maybe you can borrow one from upstairs—although what an ould soldier would be doing there is beyond me."

The chief of staff shakes his head. "I called Pete on the telephone yesterday," he says. "He tells me they have had no ould soldiers there since a feller by the name of J. Caesar was transferred out of the department. He did mention a couple of lads out of the Salvation Army but I misdoubt that they would fill the bill exactly."

"A pretty kettle of fish," the Devil says.

Well, he and the chief of staff set there jawing at each other and at first they do not notice a little, brown-faced man who is looking in at the gate. He has a twinkle to the eye of him and he listens, interested, to the conversation.

"A good day to you," he says finally.

The chief of staff looks up, scowling. "'Tis after office hours," he says. "If it's admittance you are wishing you will have to wait until tomorrow. Ten to twelve and two to four are the hours."

The little man waves his hand carelessly.

"Easy," he says, "and do you keep a civil tongue in your head. 'Tis no admittance that I am looking for, now or later. While passing, I overheard the two of you arguing and I stopped to tell you that you had better give the job to one of the Salvation Army boys because it is unlikely that you will find any ould soldiers at all, at all."

"Why so?" the Ould Wan asks, curious.

"I will introduce meself," the little man says. "I am called J. Caesar and, having been a soldier meself, I can speak with authority about such. So I tell you that ould soldiers never die and you had best look elsewhere for a guard for your coal pile, me friend."

The Ould Wan spits disgustedly. "A likely story, J. Caesar," he says. "If they do not die what becomes of 'em?"

"They march away," J. Caesar says.

"Hah!" the Devil tells him. "I will confound you with your own statement, J. Caesar. You have admitted to being a soldier. How is it then that you are here?"

"Well," this J. Caesar says sorrowfully, "I did not stick to me soldiering but got mixed up in politics, instead. I will bid you a good day. Two to four, you said the hours were?"

So the story went—as Tim Mulcahy tells it to me. True or not it brings to the mind of me one Sergint Gregg Harney whom I have known here and there.

IT BEGINS thusly and I remember it well.

I am maybe eight at the time and I am fishing on the banks of Kooskia Creek with me brother, Quentin, who is three years older. 'Tis a grand spring afternoon, the same being peculiar to the Palouse country, and the rainbow trout are biting something scandalous to see. So it is that Quentin and meself enjoy ourselves outrageously, giving little thought to the words which the ould man has spoke to us no later than the day before.

He had lined us up in front of him and orated along these lines: "This day a week ago, if me memory serves me rightly, the two of you misappropriated the brood mare, Dolly, and rode her six miles back into the hills in order that you might hunt the coyotes. Am I right?"

"Yes, sir," Quentin says to him.

"Yesterday, after I have looked high and low for you the better part of the afternoon, I find you over on the Horse Heaven flats. You were prospecting to find a gold mine, I understand?"

"Aye," Quentin tells him, unabashed.

Well, there is a leather strap hanging there on the wall of the saddle shed and the ould man looks at it reflective-like while he fingers the crease in the chin of him which a rebel bullet has left him to remember San Juan Hill by. Quentin shuffles his feet in the dust and I can

Try Thin Gillette and you'll put in
That for tough beard and tender skin
This thrifty blade sure turns the trick—
Gives easy, slick shaves—double quick!
New kind of edges on steel hard enough to cut glass
Gillette
BLADES
4 for 10¢
Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade

already feel the cut of that strap across me southern boundary, so to speak.

"Three times I have told you," the ould man goes on, "that this Harold Bear Paw escaped from the stockade at Fort Willis ten days gone now and is roaming through the hills with maybe a dozen or so of his outlaws. 'Tis me opinion that the carrot-colored scalps of the two of you would add no decoration whatsoever to this Harold Bear Paw's lodge poles. Howsoever, I am told that he is a redskin of no taste at all—him being addicted to bear claw necklaces and such forms of heathen finery—and it is likely that he would lift the hair of you just to keep his hand in."

" 'Tis not afraid of him that I am," Quentin says, spitting through his teeth. "I would shoot

The Indian reaches under his blanket and pulls out a nasty-looking knife.

him with a bullet the same as I would shoot a gopher."

The ould man looks at him quizzically.

He says, " 'Tis open season on Harold Bear Paw and his clan only for the soldiers now, the Great White Father in Washington having proclaimed a state of law and order to exist in the Palouse. Howsoever, ye are apt to find that Harold Bear Paw, himself, does not bother much with proclamations—preferring to pick up a scalp or two as the occasion offers. Therefore the two of you will stay close by the house henceforth since I do not wish to have to break off me other activities in order to bury you. Do you understand?"

Well, as I was saying, here the two of us are six miles away from home and maybe a hundred yards above the Brown's Trail ford with the fish biting fine on this afternoon.

Quentin is fifty feet downstream from me

and standing on a litle gravel bar which pushes out into the water. He has just hauled in a rainbow the length of your arm and, as I push through the bushes, he is yelling for me to come and see. Well, I see all right but I do not like what I see and I resolve right then and there that I will not disregard me ould man's words again.

The reason is this. Setting on his pony at the edge of the willows just behind is the meanest-looking Indian that I ever hope to see. There are five other Indians behind him.

I try to holler, but the words sort of stick in my throat and choke me. I drop me pole, then, and scoot across that gravel bar to where Quentin is baiting his hook again. "Did you ever see a fish the likes of that?" he asks me.

I get me mouth open then. "'Tis Harold Bear Paw, no less!" I blubber at him. "Do you look behind, Quentin! 'Tis flying from a lodge pole that our scalps will be this day!"

He turns then and I can see that the sight disturbs him some. 'Tis plain, too, that we have been maneuvered into a bad position. We are out there on the gravel bar with the water deep on either side of us and Harold Bear Paw and his braves have cut off our retreat to landward.

Well, this Harold Bear Paw walks his pony forward slowly. He is a little man with a black hat crammed down over his ears and a dirty blanket over his shoulders but he looks about seven feet tall to me. He stops maybe a dozen feet in front of us.

"Ugh!" he says. "White papoose catch'um fish."

"Do you keep away from us, you dirty heathen!" Quentin says to him in a shrill voice. "If I had me gun here I would shoot you like a gopher!"

"For the love of heaven," I whisper, "do not get him mad, Quentin. Speak pleasant to him!"

"Ugh!" says Harold Bear Paw. He turns around and jabbers in some outlandish tongue to the braves behind him and already I begin to feel the hair lifting from me head. Then he says, "Ugh! Injun like'um fish. You give'um Injun fish, huh?"

"No!" Quentin says in a low voice, but obstinate, the same which is a family trait of the O'Hares. "You cannot have the fish, you dirty heathen!"

This Harold Bear Paws scowls. He says, "Injun no got time catch'um fish. White papoose give'um Injun fish!"

He starts climbing down off his pony and I just stand there, petrified, so to speak. Then he reaches under his blanket and pulls out a nasty-looking knife.

"'Tis the end of both of us, Quentin!" I howl. "He will be scalping us now. I am sorry that I put the sticker burrs in your bed a week ago come Sunday!"

Scared I was—I can remember but once that I have been more scared since—but I still could see and admire the courage of me brother, Quentin. The picture of him is still with me, him standing there with his head a little back and the afternoon sunshine glinting off the red hair of him.

"Then do you take the damned fish!" he says and he slams the string of them full at the Indian's dirty face. "Run, Denis!"

I run and a foot trips me then and I go head over tin cup into the gravel. I am expecting the knife any minute but it does not come and so, presently, I sit up. Horses are splashing across the ford and I see that it is the soldiers from Fort Willis.

A voice says angrily, "What in hell are you doing, Arthur? Can I not let you out of me sight but you are in fresh trouble? Do you loose that redheaded young hellion before I kick Merry Christmas out of you!"

Well, I see that there is maybe half a cavalry troop slouching in their saddles at the ford, while a slender, wiry man on a gray horse is trotting toward us. Quentin is standing off a little to one side with his fists clenched and the eyes of him sparkling.

"Shoot 'im!" he says, pointing at the Indian who is wiping fish scales off his face and the corner of his dirty blanket. "Shoot 'im like you would shoot a gopher!"

The slender man reins in and sits looking down at the two of us. He is maybe twenty-five with a reckless cut to the jaw of him and a good-humored devil in his eye. I see that he wears the chevrons of a sergint.

"So you wish him shot, do you?" he asks Quentin. "And why would that be, Trooper?"

"Because he is Harold Bear Paw who has escaped from the stockade at Fort Willis and he was going to scalp me brother and meself," Quentin tells him. "Do you be about shooting him immediate!"

The sergint cocks an eye at this Indian. "Well, how about it, Arthur?" he asks.

"Ugh!" says this Indian in a sour tone of voice and then he launches into a heathen discourse in which the rest of the tribe join in. The sergint listens for a minute and then he rocks back in his saddle, laughing, while the rest of the troopers ride up. Finally this Indian grins sort of morosely, climbs back on his pony and wraps his blanket around him.

WELL, the sergint tells us then. It seems that this feller is not Harold Bear Paw at all but a government scout by the name of Arthur-Banged-in-the-Eye who is fond of fish. Having been on the move considerable of late, he has had no chance to catch fish for himself and has been trying to trade an old knife, the same which he has stole from Trooper Dulligan, to Quentin for his catch when the

It seems this feller is not Harold Bear Paw, but a government scout by the name of Arthur-Banged-in-the-Eye.

U. S. Cavalry comes on the scene and saves the day, so to speak.

Well, the upshot of it is that the sergint speaks to a couple of troopers and they swing us up across their saddles with them and we ride back to the ranch with the column. I remember that strap hanging in the saddle shed but even me apprehension cannot dispel completely the excitement of riding with a cavalry troop. 'Tis a thing that I can still feel.

We ride in and the ould man is standing by the corral watching with one hand up to shade the eyes of him. The sergint trots up and salutes him with a gay lift of his hand.

It would be Michael O'Hare that I am talking to, would it not?" this sergint asks.

"Aye," the ould man tells him. "Howsoever, you have the advantage of me, Sergint."

"Sergint Gregg Harney," the soldier tells him, "reporting with two prisoners."

The ould man lifts his own hand in a salute and I can see his eyes light up at the sight of the troopers for his own campaigns are not yet dim in the memory of him. Then he glances at where me and Quentin are still sitting in front of a trooper apiece and I can see that the strap is going to be used well this night.

"I am obliged to you, Sergint Gregg Harney," the ould man says. "'Tis two deserters that you have apprehended and just punishment will be awarded them in due course according to the rules and regulations of war. Meanwhile, will you alight and have a drink?"

"'Tis a long and thirsty march that it has been," says Sergint Gregg Harney. "With your permission we will camp here this night. It will do the horses good and 'twould give the two of us a chance to yarn about the days when we chased the Dons from Santiago, O'Hare."

The ould man squints at him suddenly. "You were in that campaign, Sergint?"

"You would not be forgetting the day when Hancock's Corps held the Bloody Angle all through the hours of one long afternoon, would ye, O'Hare?"

"I would not," the ould man tells him grimly, fingering the scar which runs across his chin.

Sergint Gregg Harney laughs. "Then maybe you will also be remembering the brave soldier boy who tied up the chin of you with a rag and who fed you a bit of rum which he had swiped from the pouch of a fat major in bivouac the night before. Sure, 'tis a short memory that you have, O'Hare. *I* remembered the minute I laid me eyes on that red hair and the ugly face of you."

"Wait!" says the ould man, pushing back his hat and staring hard. There is an excitement in his voice. "'Tis not likely that I would forget. Howsover, that was a little skinny brat of a boy who went by the name of Matt Hagen. The name I have remembered."

Sergint Gregg Harney throws back his head and laughs. "I find it convenient to change me name along with me wars, O'Hare," he says. "Then, too, I was not wearing a full beard when I was twenty-three."

"Well, I will be damned!" the ould man says suddenly. "Do you alight. 'Tis a great night that we will make of this night, Matt Hagen or Gregg Harney or whatever the hell you choose to call yourself."

Well, it was rare good fortune for Quentin and meself, for the strap was forgot. Moreover, we were permitted to sit at the edge of the firelight that night and listen while the ould man and Gregg Harney campaigned again through Cuba. Grand tales the two told. We lay there on our bellies, Quentin and me, while we listened with the eyes of us wide.

After a while the mother comes to the door with a candle in her hand and stands looking for a minute. She smiles a little and shakes her finger at the ould man.

"Well do I know you, O'Hare," she says. "'Tis yarning till daybreak that you will be—you men with the wars of you! Well, 'tis a harmless pastime, I'm thinking, and I will leave you to it. A good evenin' to you, Sergint Harney."

"And the same to you, Missis O'Hare," Gregg Harney tells her, getting to his feet. He stands there looking at her and then smiles with the mouth of him tipped up a little. "'Tis a lucky man that the O'Hare is, ma'am."

She stands for a minute longer in the doorway and me and Quentin scrooch back further in the shadows for we have no desire to be sent off to bed. Howsoever, the mother is a woman filled with a rare understanding for she smiles at the corner where we are hiding and then goes on with the lamplight trailing behind

her and the sound of her feet soft on the stairs.

"A lucky man," Sergint Gregg Harney repeats softly. He sits down and lifts his glass.

The ould man does not seem to notice. He asks, "Do you remember that morning at El Caney. . ."

Grand tales! Quentin and me lay there drinking it all in. It is long past the bedtime of the two of us but the ould man is back with Shafter's Army and he does not notice.

He says finally, "And so you have continued to follow the profession of soldiering, Gregg Harney?"

There is a bit of wistfulness in the ould man's voice and I know, sudden, that he envies Gregg Harney a little. 'Tis a thing that I can understand well now since *I* have followed the soldier's profession for the years that I have. Furthermore, there is a wanderlust that flows in the blood of the O'Hares.

"Aye," Sergint Gregg Harney answers him, pouring afresh into his glass.

"'Tis a grand thing for a young man," the ould man says slowly. "Howsoever, presently you will be getting a bit of land and taking a wife and settling down, Sergint Harney. 'Tis better so, for a man tires of wandering after a while."

Sergint Gregg Harney lifts his glass and looks at the doorway where me mother had stood. He smiles the crooked smile of him, reflective for a moment, then shakes his head.

"'Tis a tempting thought, O'Hare," he says. "It comes to me mind, however, that such is not for the Harneys since the smell of battle has ever been burned deep into them. A wife and childer are not for soldiers, O'Hare, and I'm thinking that me troop is all of the family that I need."

"You may think so now, Sergint," the ould man tells him earnestly. "Howsoever, later on a troop will be small comfort to you. There is plenty of land here—good land. Another campaign or two, perhaps, then you had best come back."

I am just a kid then but I understand, somehow, that it is the ould man trying to reassure himself that *he* had been right in *his* choice; that he is the wise one here with his house and his land and the good woman who is his wife. He is trying to kill that wish that has lain deep in him, as I have come to know well, to ride on at the head of a troop as Sergint Gregg Harney would do in the morning. I know, as I have said, because the choice was given to me, too, and I chose differently than the ould man had chosen. There have been times that I have regretted—but no matter about that now.

"'Tis the way to which I have put me foot, O'Hare," Gregg Harney is saying. "It may well be that you are right, yet what is done is done and there is no changing it."

The ould man pours more whiskey into the two glasses and slowly stuffs tobacco into his pipe. The fire is dying down now and, far off and mournful, I hear a coyote begin to howl. Gregg Harney slouches in his chair with the glow from the coals bright against the spurs on the heels of his boots.

The ould man's eyes light up at the sight of the troopers for his own campaigns are not yet dim in the memory of him.

The ould man says soberly, "'Tis a lonely road that you have put your foot to, Sergint Harney. A man grows older, whether he wills it or no, and 'tis a cruel, hard thing that, when the time of him comes at last, he should die among strangers. 'Tis better that he should have his wife and childer about him."

Gregg Harney sits quietly for a minute. Then he lifts his glass and laughs, careless and free. "O'Hare," he says, "do you not remember the song that the boys used to sing when we were in bivouac for the night?"

"There were many songs," the ould man says.

"Aye. But one song in particular. I'll sing it for you, O'Hare."

Well, he has a clear, nice voice and he sings softly so as not to disturb the mother upstairs. I have heard that song many times since but not the way that Sergint Gregg Harney sang it that night out in the middle of the Palouse.

"Ould soldiers never die, never die, never die,
Ould soldiers never die . . . they just march away.

"I will just march away, O'Hare," he says to the ould man at the end.

"And 'tis a fool that you are, Sergint Gregg Harney," the ould man tells him.

Well, Sergint Gregg Harney rides away at

The mother comes to the door with a candle in her hand. "A good evenin' to you, Sergint Harney," she says.

the head of his troopers the next morning. He stops at the top of a little rise and waves at the ould man but we never see him in the Palouse again. We hear of him once, though.

IT IS maybe a year later that the paymaster and his escort stops the night at the ranch. This paymaster is a fat man full of stories and fond of sinful ease and so, after supper, he stretches his feet out in front of the fire and talks of this and that.

"Hah!" he says, folding his hands across the middle of him and looking about the room, "you are a fortunate man, O'Hare. You have all that a man could wish—a good wife, a comfortable fire and childer about the feet of you in the evening. 'Tis a good life, indeed, and different from that of a soldier like meself."

"I have done me soldiering," the ould man tell him, a little stiff.

The paymaster does not notice. "Aye," he says. "Now I, personally, am a man of peace and quiet, sir. I abhor strife, insurrection and riot of all descriptions. Yet what can I do? I am a poor man, sir, and forced to earn me living in a profession which is filled with turbulence and upheaval."

He stretches his feet closer to the fire and squints at the cupboard where he knows the whiskey jug is kept. The ould man smokes on and does not answer. The paymaster sighs a sigh.

"'Tis that, sir, a turbulent profession. And do you know why, sir? I will tell you. 'Tis the violent and headstrong men who are in it. Not so in the old days, sir—'twas a gentleman's profession then. A man with the trouble-hunting proclivities of this Sergint Gregg Harney would not have been tolerated in them days."

"You mentioned Gregg Harney?" the ould man asks, interested all of a sudden.

The paymaster sucks in his lips as though he has unexpectedly bit into a lemon.

"The worst type of soldier, sir," he says. "A man without principle. A man who is not content to remain peaceable in the post playing poker with the other sergints or having an occasional innocent affair with the sutler's daughter—who is not above such amusements—but, instead, must be out engaged in various and sundry brands of devilment. Now I am a broad-minded man meself, sir, and am accustomed to winking at the peccadillos of others—howsover, there are practices which a righteous man cannot overlook. I am sorry to tell you, sir, that this Sergint Gregg Harney indulges in them practices."

"Hmmm," says the ould man thoughtfully. "Perhaps you would be interested in a small nip for it is a cold night out."

I can see that he wishes news of Sergint Gregg Harney.

The paymaster brightens up considerable. "I would that, sir," he says. "'Tis indeed an ill thing to take a cold in such a God-forsaken land as this. I thank you kindly."

The ould man fills the glasses and then looks at the fat paymaster expectantly. "You were speaking of one Sergint Harney?" he asks careless-like.

"It was this way," the paymaster say. "About a year ago I am in Black Butte with a thirty thousand-dollar-payroll waiting for the escort which will take me to Fort Willis. I have been telegraphed to wait and I am glad to do so because there is one Harold Bear Paw who is raiding at the time and I have no wish to meet up with this character.

"Well, I am staying at the Hunter House and at about seven in the evening this Sergint Gregg Harney comes looking for me. It seems that the officer commanding the escort has been took down with appendicitis and Sergint Harney is now in command.

"'"'Tis too late to be riding tonight,' he says. 'Instead we will start tomorrow morning early. Meanwhile will you join me in a spot of something to wash the dust away?'

"Well, being of a trusting nature I adjourn with this Sergint Harney to a nearby bar. Sir, the liquor they served there was the worst that it has ever been my misfortune to taste.

"'To the good health of you,' Sergint Harney says, 'and may you never come loose from your money bags!'

"So we stand at the bar and have another for I am not the man to fail to return another's hospitality. Presently the door opens, then, and a man comes in and ranges up at the bar with us. He is an Indian, sir, a young feller with big silver buttons up and down the front of his shirt. Sergint Harney looks at him.

"'Hah!' he says. 'Tis me good friend, Harold. 'Tis misinformed that I have been, Harold. Me information was that you were stealing horses in Oregon at the moment.'

"The Indian shakes his head. 'It was bored to death that I was up there, friend Harney,' he says. 'Stealing horses in Oregon is like taking candy away from a child. I could not stand the monotony of it.'

"He speaks in an educated way but I have scant use for Indians, educated or otherwise, and so I finish my drink and prepare to leave. Howsoever, I see that the Indian is setting them up and I feel that maybe I am being uncharitable and so I stay.

"'I am right glad that you have come back, Harold,' this Sergint Harney says. 'The first of the week I will take the troop and come out looking for you. The boys will like it since they have not had a first-rate scrap for going on two months now. How many braves have you got riding with you?'

"'Fifty-seven,' says this Indian, 'but not more than half of 'em are first-class fighting men—the rest being young and addicted to thinking over-much of girls and other inconsequential matters.'

"'Too bad,' Sergint Harney tells him. 'Howsoever, to make things even, I will leave half of the troop at home, though it will break the hearts of them.'

"'Oh, bring 'em along,' Harold says. 'It will do them lazy bucks of mine good. You could not start tomorrow, friend Harney?'

"'No,' Sergint Harney says regretfully. 'Tomorrow I have to escort this paymaster back to the fort. 'Tis in line of duty.'

"He sets his glass down, sir, and looks thoughtful and 'tis then that I begin to misdoubt the man. All at once his eyes light up and he fills our glasses again.

"'Why did I not think of it, Harold?' he says. 'We will reverse the customary process. There will be thirty thousand dollars in gold in the paymaster's buckboard tomorrow and, instead of me chasing you in order that I may take you in to be hanged, you will chase me in order that you may hold up the paymaster. We ought to make a grand fight out of it.'

"The Indian looks dubious. 'I have always considered robbing paymasters somewhat lower sport than stealing horses in Oregon, friend Harney,' he says. 'Howsoever, I will try it—just to oblige you.'

"'Fine,' Sergint Harney says. 'We will move out come daybreak along the river trail. It is my thought that I will take you back to the hanging of you this time sure.'

"The Indian grunts and lifts up his glass. 'How!' he says. 'Maybe you will and maybe you won't.'

"SO THE two of them shake hands friendly-like and then the Indian goes on out into the night.

"As for meself, I am perturbed and I rebuke this Sergint Harney thusly, 'Are you quite out of your mind that you should tell an Indian, even a friendly Indian, that I am carrying a payroll in the buckboard tomorrow?'

"'Oh,' says this Sergint Harney unconcernedly, 'that is no friendly Indian. That is Harold Bear Paw.'

"Well, I am took back considerable. 'Did I understand you to say that you have been standing here talking with that Indian which half of the troops west of the Missouri have been looking for, Sergint?'

"'Shucks,' he tells me. 'Harold is a good boy—just impulsive, is all. He and I have had some very pretty scraps together, very pretty. I will get him one of these days.'

"'One of these days!' I holler at him. 'Man, are you out of your mind? Why, in the name of the seven pink toes of the prophet, did you not call in the soldiers and take him while he was standing here?'

"Well, this Sergint Harney looks at me sort of shocked. 'I could not do that,' he says. 'I have nothing personal against Harold and it would be unspeakable to perpetrate such a thing against him after I have drunk his liquor and all. Besides, I would then have nobody to fight with, since fighting men of Harold's caliber are scarce in these parts. Well, it will be cold in the morning and a nip will taste good when we start out. Bartender, do you give me a pint to carry along in the pocket of me.'

"The bartender slides the bottle across and this Sergint Harney puts it in his pocket. As I have said, there is a look in the eye of him that I do not like.

"I then say with dignity, 'Sergint, you have practically invited this Harold Bear Paw to hold me up tomorrow and I refuse to be a party to such nefarious goings-on. You may ride back to Fort Willis tomorrow but you will ride alone. As for meself, I will telegraph for instructions, remaining in Black Butte until same come. I bid you good night, Sergint Harney.'

"'No,' he says decidedly, shaking his head. 'Should Harold get the best of things tomorrow and find no payroll he would think that I had sold him a pup. You will come along, me friend.'

"Well, we rode out at daybreak the next morning, sir."

The fat paymaster holds up his glass and squints at it against the firelight. The ould man does not seem to see. The paymaster grunts, disappointed, and lapses into a deep silence.

"And did Harold Bear Paw show up?" the ould man asks him after a while.

"He did," the fat paymaster says dourly.

"And did he get the gold?"

"He got *me*," says the fat paymaster.

The ould man gets up then and lifts the jug. The whiskey gurgles pleasantly against the fat paymaster's glass and the sour look wears off the face of him something miraculous. He settles back.

" 'Tis a good brand of whiskey that you drink, O'Hare," he says. "Now that stuff they sell back in Black Butte—faugh! 'Tis like drinking barbed wire which has been dissolved in alkali brine."

"You were speaking of Harold Bear Paw and Sergint Harney," the ould man reminds him again.

"So I was," the fat paymaster says. "Well, it is along in midafternoon of that day and the column is coming up out of a shallow coulee when a couple of shots bang out up ahead. They are followed by maybe a dozen more. This Sergint Harney, who is riding beside the buckboard at the time, slaps his hand against the thigh of him and grins.

" 'I would have bet me month's pay that Harold would pick this spot for his ambush,' he says happily. 'Chum, the man is a soldier! He knows well that there is no proper cover nearer than the crossing of the Little Windy and that we will have to make a running fight of it since we have a payroll to guard.'

"So Sergint Harney sings out, 'Gallop . . . *ho!*' to the troop and off we go.

"Well, the ground is some rough so that the buckboard bounds along like a jack rabbit going over the tall sagebrush and I experience considerable difficulty in hanging onto me seat. Howsoever, I am not so busy that I do not have time to note that there are maybe a hundred Indians which are swung out in a long line some four hundred yards off and which are riding hell-for-Uncle Moe to cut us off. They are yelling something scandalous, sir, and they are shooting off assorted firearms.

"Well, 'tis plain to see that they are going to get across our line of march but that does not seem to trouble Sergint Harney. He is riding at the head of the column with his horse running very pretty while the sergint whoops at every jump.

" 'Close up, boys!' he sings out. ' 'Tis riding right through 'em that we will be doin'!'

"Well, at the moment, me dislike for this Sergint Harney is what you might call acute but I cannot help seeing and admiring that this man is a soldier. The troopers swing in tight around the buckboard and away we go. 'Tis as nasty a little fracas as you would care to see, sir, for the matter of some minutes.

"As I have said, I am a man of peace and me work is the dispensing of Uncle Sam's gold to the hard-working soldiery and not engaging in brawls and similar forms of amusement. Howsoever, on this occasion I forget me principles to the extent of taking a pot shot or two and I get me a fat buck who has been riding a roan pony. He topples off into the dust, a matter which fills me with a considerable amount of sinful satisfaction.

"The dust boils up something wonderful and there is more noise than somewhat. I see bare-backed horses milling around here and there but I do not see any empty cavalry saddles. Like I have said, the American aborigine is not a first-class shot.

"Then, all of a sudden, the Indians break and go streaming away and this Sergint Harney sings out, 'McCoy, do you harry the bunch on the right while I will do the same on the left! Flannigan, you will stay with the paymaster—head for the crossing of the Little Windy and do not tarry in your going!'

"The troopers swing away with a yell and, a minute later, there is only the corporal, Flannigan, and maybe a dozen men left with the buckboard. We are moving fast but not fast enough for Corporal Flannigan. He looms up close beside the team in the dust.

" 'The orders is to *march* and, by God, we are going to march!' he yells. Then he leans down and lays his quirt onto the horses. Sir, they had been running before but now they went away from there in a fashion that was a scandal to see. I was in a position to observe that, sir.

"We hit a bump and me and the buckboard parted company sudden and simultaneous. Next I find that I am sitting in a clump of sagebrush watching the cavalcade while it disappears over the crest of a little rise with a whoop and a hurrah, so to speak.

"Well, I wait for 'em to come back for me but, as I have mentioned, the dust is some thick and they do not miss me at first. 'Tis then that me dislike for this Sergint Harney becomes practically homicidal. He has left me in the middle of a desolate and God-forsaken country on foot. I am surrounded by hostiles. Furthermore, me throat is as dry as a last year's bird's nest."

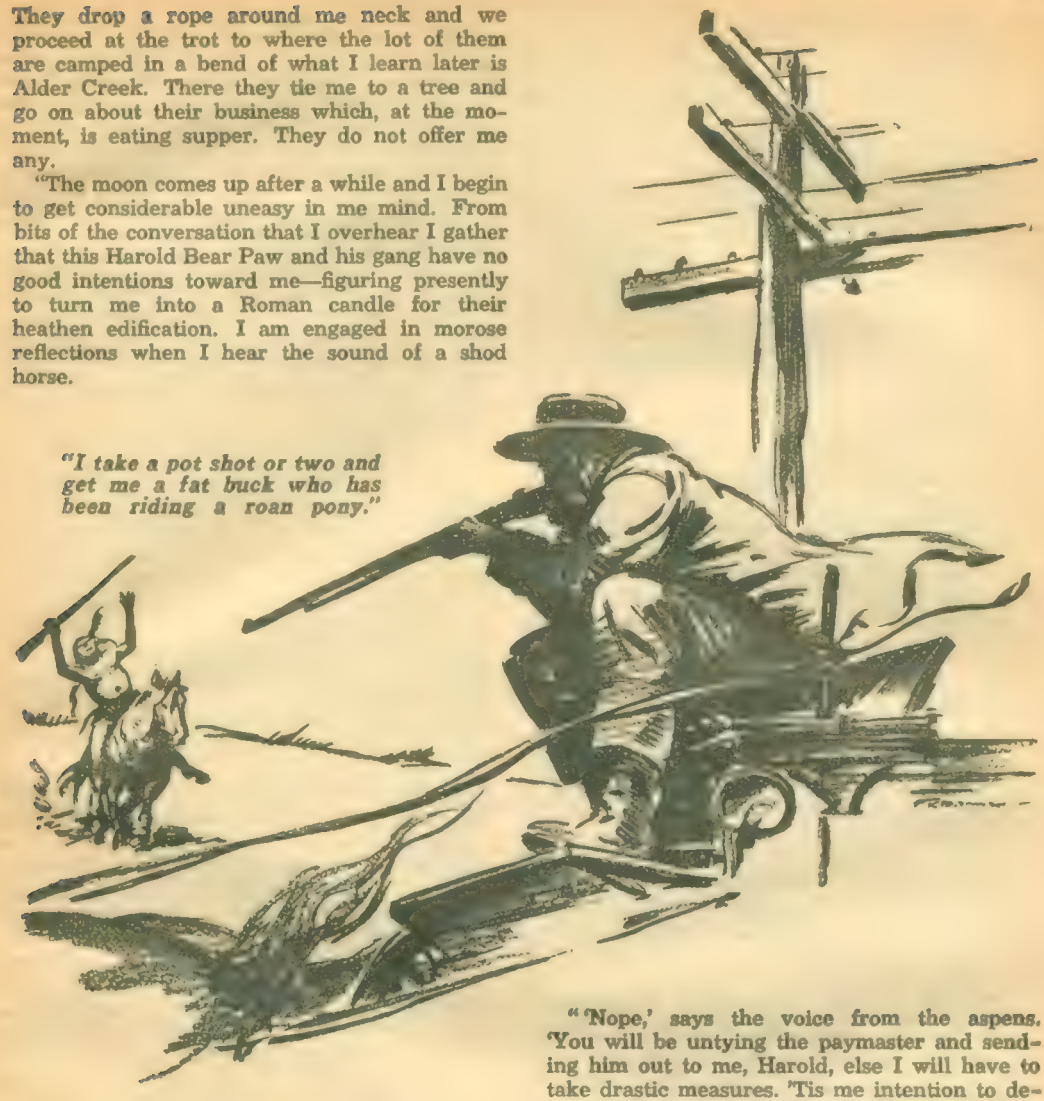
THE fat paymaster lapses into silence again and, without speaking, the ould man reaches across and fills up his glass.

"You were setting in the middle of the sagebrush," the ould man reminds him.

"Well," the fat paymaster goes on, "it is close to dark and I am following the tracks of the departed buckboard when a half dozen of Harold Bear Paw's cutthroats pick me up.

They drop a rope around me neck and we proceed at the trot to where the lot of them are camped in a bend of what I learn later is Alder Creek. There they tie me to a tree and go on about their business which, at the moment, is eating supper. They do not offer me any.

"The moon comes up after a while and I begin to get considerable uneasy in me mind. From bits of the conversation that I overhear I gather that this Harold Bear Paw and his gang have no good intentions toward me—figuring presently to turn me into a Roman candle for their heathen edification. I am engaged in morose reflections when I hear the sound of a shod horse.



"I take a pot shot or two and get me a fat buck who has been riding a roan pony."

"Harold Bear Paw gets up and goes around the fire, reaching for his gun, and the rest of the braves stir themselves likewise. Then a voice says from a little clump of aspens maybe fifty yards away, 'Do you stand easy, Harold. I have you covered from the prone position and it would pain me considerable to have to pick you off like you was a turkey at a turkey shoot.'

"'Tis Sergint Harney's voice and I see that he is in the aspen clump, hid by the shadows, while Harold Bear Paw and his copper-colored cohorts are silhouetted against the firelight.

"Harold answers mildly, 'Why, 'tis me friend, Harney. Do put down your gun and come in and be sociable, friend Harney.'

"'Nope,' says the voice from the aspens. 'You will be untying the paymaster and sending him out to me, Harold, else I will have to take drastic measures. 'Tis me intention to deliver him safe to Fort Willis in accordance with the rules and regulations of war and the customs of the service.'

"'I had figured to toast him presently,' this Harold retorts regretfully. 'The boys was sort of looking forward to it.'

"'"Tis sorry to disappoint them that I am,' Sergint Harney says. 'Maybe some other time. Howsoever, you must let him go else you will cause repercussions in the War Department.'

"Harold Bear Paw shrugs his shoulders. 'Well,' he says, 'if that is the way it is, that is the way it is. Still, the boys have went to considerable trouble to gather him in and they should have some reimbursement, so to speak. I will tell you what, friend Harney, do you send in the thirty thousand dollars in the payroll and we will send out the paymaster.'

"'There is point in your argument,' Sergint Harney says, 'and I know well that a man does not care to work for nothing. Howsoever, thirty thousand dollars is too much to pay for one paymaster—the same not being in first-class shape, at that. I will offer you a pint of whiskey for him, instead.'

"'What brand of whiskey?' this Indians says.

"'McCudden's Monongahela, the same which I procured in Black Butte not twenty-four hours gone.'

"This Harold Bear Paw makes a bad face and I do not blame him, for the taste of that snake poison is still rank in me own mouth. 'That is your best offer, friend Harney?' Harold asks.

"'It is.'

"'Oh, well,' this Harold Bear Paw says, 'at that I am probably cheating you. Do you put the whiskey on a rock and I will send the paymaster out.'

"Sir, I remember again how bad that whiskey is and I am affronted more than somewhat. For a minute I consider refusing to go. Howsoever, 'tis me plain duty to proceed to Fort Willis and pay off the licentious soldiery so I hold me tongue, though it costs me considerable effort.

"Presently I join Sergint Harney in the aspen clump. He has a led horse with him and the two of us mount up and proceed to the crossing of the Little Windy where I learn the rest of the troop is camped. It is some time before I have composed meself sufficient to speak.

"'Sergint Harney,' I say to him then, 'with me own eyes I have seen that you are guilty of various crimes and misdemeanors—to wit: you have furnished aid and comfort to the enemy, the same being in direct violation of the Articles of War which forbids such practices.'

"'Aid?' he asks me.

"'You have given him whiskey,' I say grimly.

"'Oh,' this Sergint Harney says. *'That!'* He laughs as though the idea pleases him. ''Tis small aid and comfort that Harold will get from it, indeed—such ingredients not being injected into McCudden's Monongahela.'

"I am not to be put off. 'Me duty is plain,' I tell him. 'At Fort Wiflis I will report the circumstances. Then they will stand you up against a wall and fill you full of bullets, such being the rules and customs of war.'

"'No, they will not do that, me friend,' this Sergint Harney says to me seriously. 'Me destiny does not run so.'

"We ride on and presently he begins to sing, a song that I have not heard before. 'Tis a catchy tune that it has and the thing has stuck in me mind. It goes so:

"Ould soldiers never die, never die, never die,
Ould soldiers never die . . . they just march away."

It is getting late and the fire has burned low. The ould man finishes his glass then and sets it back on the table while the fat paymaster stares at the shadows which stretch across the floor.

"I would not believe Gregg Harney to be afraid of any Indian whether it be Harold Bear Paw or another," the ould man says quietly after a little.

The fat paymaster rouses himself. "I have not said that he was afraid, O'Hare. He brings this Harold Bear Paw into Fort Willis maybe a month later where the Indian is duly hanged for the nuisances which he has committed. I gather that considerable fracas attends the capture during the course of which this Sergint Harney gets a slug through the wishbone of him. Thereafter there is peace around Fort Willis for a time."

"He recovers?" the ould man asks softly.

"He does," says the fat paymaster, "and presently he applies for a transfer down into the Border country, complaining that the Palouse has got quiet and peaceable so that it is fit only for old ladies, paymasters and such."

"So he is gone," the ould man says.

"He is, O'Hare. I saw him once on the parade ground before he goes. 'I am happy to see that you have recovered from your wound, Sergint Harney,' I say to him.

"He grins at me. 'Chum,' he says, 'have I not told you that ould soldiers never die?'"

WELL, the years roll on what with one thing and another. The Palouse is becoming settled and the Indian war troubles are gone. The ould man has become prosperous with the years and has become a power, so to speak, in the country. Quentin, me brother, has married and has settled down on a farm of his own.

Howsoever, as I have said before, I am cursed with the loose foot and I have a desire to go. 'Tis an opportune time because the Mexicans are cutting up at Vera Cruz and the United States has sent the Marines down there as a protest against such reprehensible goings-on. Well, presently I go to Fort Willis and enlist. The mother, heaven rest her, cries a little but I can see that the ould man is proud for he has not forgotten San Juan Hill and El Caney.

I go down to Mexico but the fighting is already over.

It is not long after that that the Great White Father in Washington gets sick and tired of the goings-on in Europe. So one day the word comes to pack up and pull out. I go on across to France with the regiment in the fall of 1917 where we do this and that which is not apropos to this yarn, so to speak.

In the summer of '18 we go into the Soissons scrap and after that we go on down into the Argonne. Much happens there but one thing sticks out in the memory of me.

It happens up along the Meuse and it is on a night that is blacker than the inside of a wildcat. The company is resting a little along the road when an ambulance column passes us going back to the rear. The road is no more than a trail and the jolting of the ambulances is a hard and cruel thing for them wounded for most of them are hurt bad. I can hear the groans of them and the feverish talk—it is not a good thing to listen to. Then I hear something else and *that* is a strange thing to listen to there in the middle of the night, above the grumble of motors and the sounds of men in deep pain.

It is a man singing and it takes me back across better than a dozen years to the Palouse country again. I feel funny, too, because it comes from one of the wagons and none but the ones that are badly wounded ride there. It is a song that I have heard before.

"Ould soldiers never die, never die, never die,
Ould soldiers never die . . . they just march away."

The voice is shaky and weak but, for a minute, I can see a man as he sat there in his saddle at the crossing of Kooskia Creek with the sun on his face and the recklessness deep in the eyes of him. I know, then, that it is Sergint Gregg Harney who rides in one of them ambulances.

* * * * *

Well, the war ends finally. We go up into Germany for a while. Then they bring us home and we settle down to adapting ourselves to Prohibition, and women's votes and other horrors of peace. I serve here and there at various places in the States. Then me loose foot gets the better of me and I put in to go out to China.

It is there that I last hear of Sergint Gregg Harney.

One night—this is in 1935 as I remember—we are paraded to hear a General Order read by a captain with a little mustache. I do not pay much attention at first until I hear the name. The order went thusly:

> "After forty years of honorable and meritorious service in the Armies of the United States, First Sergint Gregg Harney is retired for physical disability resulting from wounds received in action. Sergint Harney will proceed to San Francisco on the first available transport, thence to his home . . ."

For some reason the mind of me goes back to that night in the Palouse when Sergint Gregg Harney and the ould man had sat in front of the fire. That talk, also comes back to me.

"'Tis a lonely road that you have put your foot to," the ould man had said, I remember. "A man grows older and 'tis a cruel thing that, when his time comes to him, he should die among strangers. 'Tis better that he should have his wife and childer about him."

I remember, too, the free and careless laughter of this man, Sergint Gregg Harney, as he had lifted his glass. "O'Hare," he had said, "do you remember the song which the boys used to sing in bivouac of a night?"

Well, I remember the song and I think of it after the parade is dismissed and I am going back to my tent, Howsoever, I have other things on my mind so presently I forget.

WELL, it is in October of 1944 some years later. I am then top sergint of an infantry outfit which is in reserve in a little town some distance back of the Roer River. We are getting ready for the big push across the Rhine which everybody has been expecting for some days now.

There is a little café in the village and I am there having a glass of wine with me friend, Terry McHenry, who is top kick of "C" Company in the same regiment. It has been a hard

TOPS FOR QUALITY!
PEPSI-COLA PEPSI-COLA

and trying day and so I roll the wine on me tongue and listen to the sound of the guns to the East and wonder if I am ever going to teach young Radeske not to shut his eyes when he pulls the trigger of his M-1.

Terry McHenry says to me thoughtfully, "Have I ever mentioned this feller, O. Smith, to you, First Sergint O'Hare?"

"You have not," I tell him.

"'Tis a peculiar thing," Terry goes on, scratching at his chin. "I meant to speak about it but it slipped me mind. This O. Smith reports up to the company maybe two weeks ago while we are still at St. Denis. He has no papers with him except a carbon copy of an order transferring him to the outfit. He reports to me at what I laughingly call the company orderly room.

"'Where is the service records of you, Recruit?' I ask. 'Likewise, the clothing slips and similar assorted papers setting forth the courts-martial that you have had and the amount of pay that you owe Uncle Sam and other interesting and consequential data about your private life?'

"He smiles at me easy and nice and I know that he is an ould soldier. 'Tis sending them on that me last first sergint said that he would be doing.' he tells me. 'I was in a hurry for me transfer, do you see?'

"'I see, all right,' I tell him grimly as I look him over more closely. He is a little man and as hairless as an onion. His face is brown and wrinkled considerable about the eyes and I will bet my next month's pay that he will not see fifty again. 'O. Smith,' I say to him, 'you will now keep a straight tongue in the head of you and answer me questions. Do you understand?'

"'Perfect, Sergint,' he says seriously. 'Ask on.'

"'How ould would you be?'

"'Forty-four, come the thirteenth of October,' he tells me. 'I was born in St. Louis in the fall of 1900, praise be. Me mother's only child, heaven rest the memory of her.'

"'Let be, O. Smith,' I tell him severely. 'Tis not interested in the family history of you that I am. Your mother did not know her good luck when she had but the one like you—furthermore, I am thinking that if you will add ten years to that forty-four you will come closer to telling the truth. Are you a volunteer?'

"'I come in by way of the draft, Sergint,' he says. 'You would not have had me avoid me plain duty to me country, would you?'

"'That is lie Number Two,' I say to him. 'They have not yet gotten around to drafting grandpappies similar to yourself.'

"Well, I see a look of sorts come into his eye. 'Tis the same warm, friendly kind of a look that a forty-five muzzle has. 'Tis the unpleasantest look that I have ever seen, Sergint O'Hare, and I have seen many unpleasant looks.

"Then this O. Smith says to me softly, 'Perhaps I had better warn you, Sergint, I am a man who is afflicted with a peculiar sort of a malady—'tis a sort of blankness that comes over the mind of me at times and 'tis brought on when I am addressed as *grandpappy* and similar opprobrious names. Do you understand, Sergint?'

"Do you mark the effrontery of the thing, First Sergint O'Hare? Speaking to me like that in me own orderly room! 'And what happens when this curious blankness comes over you?' I ask very sarcastically.

"'Accidents happen to them that has done the name-calling, Sergint,' he tells me soft and easy, smiling while he says it. I am not fooled, though, because that smile has got all of the warmth and friendliness of a December morning off the Maine coast in it.

"I tell him then, very grimly, 'There will be no accidents in this outfit. I know the type of you well, O. Smith. Maybe thirty years you have spent in the army, else I do not know the marks of an ould soldier when I see one, yet I do not see any chevrons upon the sleeve of you. I think that I understand *that,* too. You are a troublemaker for the thing is writ plain in the ugly face of you, O. Smith.

"'Now do you attend to what I am about to say. This is a green outfit but it is a soldiering one and you will soldier with it. Keep the nose of you clean and the two of us will get along fine; do not do so and you will be applying for another transfer in a hell of a hurry. Is it understood?'

"'Aye,' he says. 'Would that be all?'

"I am about to say, 'It would not, Grandpappy,' but I do not. I say instead, 'It would not, O. Smith. For threatening me in me own orderly room you will do three days of extra cook's police this week. Do you now report to the mess sergint immediately.'

"Well, he smiles at me and then goes out, Sergint O'Hare."

TERRY McHENRY pours a little more red wine into his glass and sips at it thoughtfully. I do likewise for, as I have said, it has been a hard and trying day. Terry sighs presently.

"He is a good soldier, First Sergint O'Hare. He is as good a soldier as you would care to see and I would make him a corporal tomorrow on his soldiering. Howsoever, there are other considerations in the case."

"Such as?" I ask.

"For one thing he has no papers yet. Such is not me greatest worry, howsoever. It is the accidents."

"Accidents?" I ask him.

"The same," Terry tells me gloomily. "First, Private Lawton shows up one morning with

his nose bent at an angle and the two eyes of him as black as the inside of a Congo tomcat. I interrogate him. He has bumped into the stable door is all that I can find out from him. Howsoever, I learn that he has addressed Private O. Smith as 'Grandpop' the day before.

"Three days later, Corporal Mike Glendenning gets kicked in the stomach by the French lady's cow, in whose quarters Mike is temporarily residing, and discommoded considerable. It seems that Mike has been so unwise as to pass remarks about the government robbing the grave in O. Smith's hearing. Then Private First Class Wasson has his ear half tore off when he falls down maybe a dozen stone steps. He has been heard to say at chow, 'Pass the spuds, Pappy—if you ain't too old for such violent exercise.'

"Well, that is the way it has been going, First Sergint O'Hare. So, a couple of days ago, I go up to Malhaux where regimental headquarters are and I talk with Sergint-Major Daugherty about the papers which have not come. He has seen nothing of them nor has he ever seen a copy of this O. Smith's orders, which is a peculiar thing in itself.

"'Have you the copy which he gave to you, First Sergint McHenry?' he asks me.

"'I have,' I tell him and I show him the typewritten order which he looks at and gives back to me.

"'I have never heard of this General Milligan who has signed the thing. There was a General Milligan back in the ould army in the days when I was a lance corporal but he has been dead and gone for twenty years. However, the order appears to be all right, First Sergint McHenry.'

"'You are a great help to me, Sergint-Major Daugherty,' I say bitterly. 'Meanwhile this O. Smith is decimating me company with accidents. And how can I keep me paper work straight with no records?'

"'Your problem and not mine, Sergint McHenry,' Sergint-Major Daugherty tells me. 'Howsoever, presently we will be going up into the line. Maybe the Germans will kill this O. Smith off and then ye will have nothing more to worry about. I bid you a good afternoon, First Sergint McHenry.'

"Well, I go back to the billets and I call this O. Smith in. He stands at attention in front of me and I cannot help but admit that there is a likeableness about the little man—when his weakness is not upon him, that is.

"'Private O. Smith,' I say, 'there are some things about your case which do not meet the eye exactly.'

"'There are, Sergint,' he agrees with me softly.

"'You come up and join the outfit with no orders whatsoever except a paper which is signed by a general who I suspect has been dead for twenty years. I am warning you that it is highly irregular.'

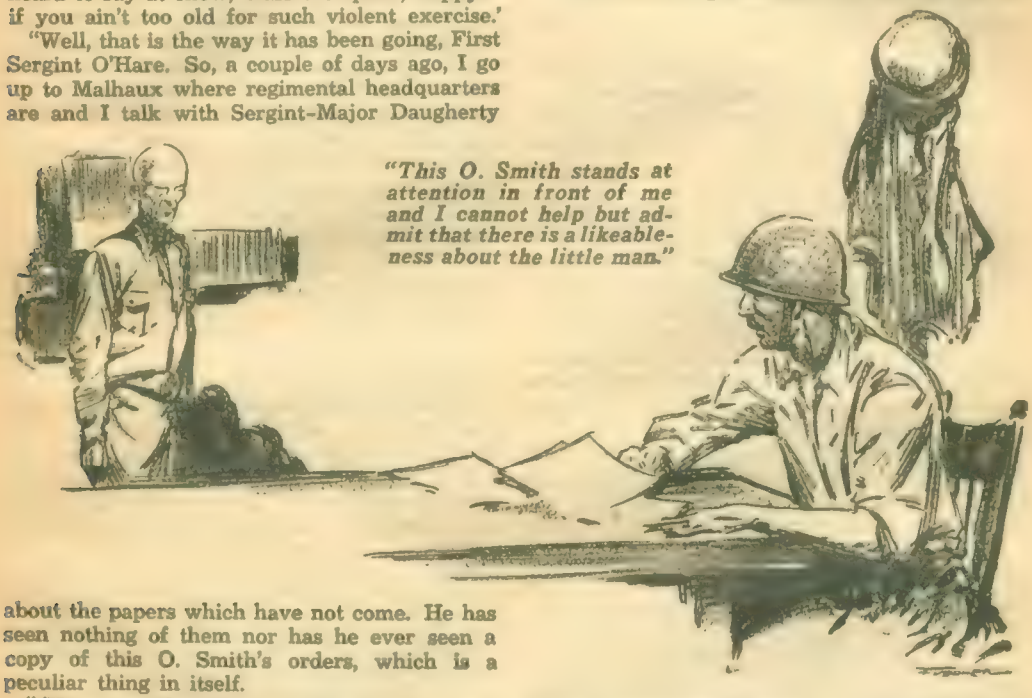
"'Sergint,' he says, looking me in the eye, 'until me papers come I cannot be paid. Am I right?'

"'You are.'

"'Then as long as I am not paid I am not defrauding the government, am I?'

"'It is one way of putting the thing,' I say to him, puzzled.

"Sudden, though, I see that his fingers are shaking and that there is a desperate look in the eyes of him. He says in a low tone, 'Presently we will go up into the line, Sergint. Do you not think that there is plenty of time to be looking for papers *after* we have come back out of the line?'"



"This O. Smith stands at attention in front of me and I cannot help but admit that there is a likeableness about the little man."

Well, Terry sips at his wine some more and stares moodily at the wall. It is getting on toward chow time and so I finish me glass and push it across the table as I get up.

"I would not let it worry me," I tell Terry. "After all, paper work is of scant importance in the middle of a war."

"You have not mentioned the accidents," Terry reminds me.

A soldier comes into the café then and stands, looking around for a minute. Then he comes over to the table where Terry and meself have been sitting. Terry looks up and then shrugs the shoulders of him wearily.

"What is it that ye want, Moulihan?" he asks.

This Moulihan says, "You are wanted back at the billets, Sergint. Ye had better come quick because—"

"Don't tell me—let me guess," Terry says sourly. "There has been another accident."

"Yes, sir," this Moulihan tells him. "Sergint Fisher has fell into a well and tore the half of his scalp off."

WELL, I go back to the billets, thoughtful, that night. However, we are ordered up into the line a couple of days later and I forget about this O. Smith, having other more important things to think about.

So, there comes a night when the outfit is laying in a little ravine when dark comes down. It has been a long and toilsome day in which we have been engaged constantly with machine guns and low-flying airplanes and shell fire—the Germans being specialists in such unpleasant forms of activity. The weather has been hot and the boys are tired.

At the moment we are held up by cross machine-gun fire coming from a place called Grimpaux Farm which the Germans are holding onto something fierce. This Grimpaux Farm is maybe half a dozen stone buildings with a stone wall about the lot of 'em. It is as strong as a fort, setting, like it does, at the top of a little hill so that the German machine-gunners are looking down the necks of the lot of us, so to speak. We have sent back word asking for artillery fire but nothing has come of that yet.

Cap'n Jackson has been killed early this morning and Lootenant McPherson, who is now commanding the company, crawls up to where I am laying, while I look this farm over through a pair of glasses which I have took from a fat Bavarian major.

"We have got orders to get into the place come dark," Lootenant McPherson says sourly. "'Tis going to be a tough nut to crack, O'Hare."

"It is that," I agree with him, for I can see well that it is so. The country is bare and provides little cover except for the ravine which we are lying in. This ravine angles to the north and passes maybe a quarter of a mile from the farm. "Still," I add, "it may be that there are ways and means."

"Such as?" he asks me.

"I recall hearing about a similar circumstance which occurred in Cuba once," I tell him. "It happened to my ould man. They were trying to take a stone fort which was filled full of Dons with Mauser rifles and evil intentions. Howsoever, they outwitted 'em with superior strategy and took the place without losing a man. The scheme might work again."

"Do you discourse upon this method," he says to me.

"It was this way," I tell him. "A simple plan, but effective. The ould man's troop—he was a cavalryman—was strung out in a line facing this fort, but under cover, much the same as we are here. When the command was given, they started a slow frontal advance, still keeping under cover as much as they could but showing enough of themselves to whet the appetites of the Dons in the fort. Meanwhile, they created a commotion which was a scandal to listen to—shooting off their carbines, yelling and generally creating the impression that they were making an attack in force and at considerable speed.

"While this racket was going on, maybe two squads of them worked easy and gentle along to the flank through the tall grass until they were in the rear of the fort. Well, the Dons had all been attracted up front by the hullabaloo which was going on, so the ould man's two squads got into their rear and created a diversion which would have done your heart good to see. Then the rest of the outfit came in through the front gate and the thing was done."

"Humph!" says Lootenant McPherson. "I misdoubt that it will work here but there is no harm in trying it. A man cannot be killed any deader when using one form of attack than when using another. You will lead the flanking party, O'Hare."

"Yes, sir," I say.

"At 2230 hours sharp we will be starting the diversion," the lootenant goes on. "Do you shoot up a red rocket as a signal when you get into the farm, and me and the rest of the boys will advance at the gallop, so to speak."

I make an estimate of the situation before it gets dark and I do not like overmuch what I see. "C" Company is over on the right of us maybe three-four hundred yards, held up likewise by the cross fire from the farm, but we have sent a runner over to them saying that we will have a patrol in front of them and to watch where they're shooting. The ravine angles off on the boundary between the two companies and runs straight toward the farm for a little ways; then turns to the north.

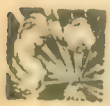
Well, comes 2220, and me and the two squads are in position in this ravine where it angles closest to the farm. We have maybe four hundred yards still to cross in the open but we will not start out until Lootenant McPherson begins his diverson. Grimpaux Farm is dark but every now and then a machine gun opens up there just by way of letting us know that they ain't asleep.

I talk softly with Red Gunnar who is me second in command. "I will take young Herraty with me and the two of us will go ahead now just to see whether or not any Huns is cluttering up our line of advance," I say. "Should we run into any such, young Herraty will come back and guide the rest of you up so that we may assault them on the quiet. If young Herraty does *not* come back then you will start forward as soon as the rest of the outfit cuts loose down below. In such case young Herraty and meself will then meet you at the northeast corner of the wall. Do you understand?"

"Sure," Red Gunnar says.

The night is quiet, as me and young Herraty start out. There is considerable shelling going on down to the southeast and a sort of desultory rifle fire which is general along the line but nothing much to speak of. It has been a hard day all around and both sides seem to be glad to rest easy for a little while.

Young Herraty and meself go along quiet and unimpeded for a matter of five minutes. We find no Heinie patrols—though the night is so dark that there could have been such within a dozen feet of us and we would never have seen 'em. Anyway, we are within about a hundred and fifty yards of the farm when things begin to happen.



"Wham!"

A shell smacks down maybe a dozen yards away and I can hear a flock of nasty little bees go singing off over the head of me. Three more shells slap down and I know that it is best that young Herraty and meself go away from there if we do not wish to read our names in the casualty lists tomorrow.

"Head for the farm!" I yell at him and suit the action to the word. Them shells has been a little to the rear of us and, since I figure that there's more of 'em on the way, going back would come under the heading of a hazardous procedure.

Well, we make the wall of the farm all right and crouch down for a minute while we catch our breath and watch them big fireflies leaping around over the ground out there where we have just been. I understand what has happened and swear sorrowfully.

It is our own artillery, which we have asked for help, and they are putting down a concentration out there under the impression that they are shelling hell-for-Uncle Moe out of Grimpaux Farm. It is such practices that keep wars from being dull.

"Them damned gun greasers have ruined as pretty a bit of tactics and strategy as you ever saw," I tell young Herraty morosely. "Howsoever, there is no help for it. It may be that they will lengthen the range and blow up the machine guns which have been pestering us and then we will have nothing to do but walk into the farm unmolested."

"'Tis a cheerful thought," young Herraty says to me, very sour. "Especially considering the fact that you and me are now at the farm and apt to get blowed up along with the machine guns, Sergint."

"There is truth in what you say, young Herraty," I tell him. "Howsoever, being good soldiers we will wait and see what comes."

Well, we don't have long to wait. Sure enough, the artillery presently becomes aware that they are shooting short so they take corrective action, so to speak. Them condemned flashes start walking toward the two of us, slow.

"I do not like it," young Herraty says. "Pretty soon them damned shells will paint us across this wall like you would put whitewash

CAN YOUR SCALP PASS THE
*F-N TEST?
*The Famous Finger Nail Test
1 "It's F-N, the test for men!" Scratch your head —if you find dryness or loose dandruff you need Wildroot Cream-Oil. Buy the large economy size.
YOUR HAIR CAN LOOK LIKE THIS WITH NEW
WILDROOT CREAM-OIL
2 Keeps hair well combed all day without that greasy look! Grooms without grease! Relieves dryness, removes loose ugly dandruff. Your hair looks good and feels good.
NON-ALCOHOLIC
CONTAINS REFINED
LANOLIN!
3 Refined LANOLIN is a soothing oil that closely resembles the oil of the human skin. Get Wildroot Cream-Oil from your barber or druggist.
NON-ALCOHOLIC

on the side of a garage. Personally, I prefer me chances with the Heinies within, Sergint."

There is truth in what the boy says so the two of us go over the wall fast with the shells coming along maybe two jumps behind. Inside, we bump into a stone barn and feel along it until we come to a door and go in it. It is black and does not smell too good in there but, at the moment, me and young Herraty are not what you would call choosy. I am hoping that there are no Heinies occupying this particular barn right now but, if any of 'em are, I am going to dispute the possession of it with 'em considerable, since shells are now bursting out in the yard in a way that sounds unhealthy to me.

The two of us slip along the wall and scrunch down in the dark in one corner. Outside, we can hear all hell busting loose.

"I have always considered the artillery to be an obnoxious lot," young Herraty yells in me ear. "I have not seen anything tonight to change me opinion of them, Sergint."

Well, there is much in what he says.

The shelling stops finally after maybe ten-fifteen minutes and the sudden quiet is startling almost. The two of us lay quiet for a minute, listening, but we do not hear anything except a machine gun which is yammering in the night off to one side.

Young Herraty whispers, "We may as well see what sort of a place this is that we are in, Sergint. I am going to light a match. Do you stand ready to liquidate any Squareheads which present themselves."

"Light ahead," I tell him. "There is no point in prolonging the suspense."

He shades the match carefully with his hands but the light flares out and I see that we are in an outhouse of some kind and not in a barn as I had first thought. 'Tis apparent that the place has been used for living quarters for there are bunks along the wall and a table in the center with a candle, stuck into the neck of a bottle, standing in the middle of it. The match goes out then.

Young Herraty is about to strike another when I suddenly put me hand on his arm. I have heard something that I do not like—the sound of hobnails scraping along the cobbles outside. I also hear guttural voices.

"Into the corner with you where the bunks will hide the two of us," I whisper to young Herraty. "Do you start nothing until I give the word."

Well, a minute or two later there is a dim glow at the door. I cannot see 'em but, from the sounds, I guess that maybe half a dozen men are coming into the place.

One voice growls out a command, then a match flares and the candle begins to sputter. Howsoever, the shadows are deep where me and young Herraty are hiding and we are safe for the moment. I can peek through a chink in the bunk and I see that there are four men standing around the table and a fifth setting down. I take it he is an officer—maybe a non-com—but anyway I do not like the face of him.

He snarls something at one of the men and I gather that the soldier replies, "Yes, sir," or words to that effect, because he salutes and goes out.

Presently he comes back with two more of his tribe and the three of 'em are pushing a man in front of them. He comes into the light and I see that he is a Yank with the face of him considerable cut up, to say nothing of his field jacket being split up the back and most of one leg of his trousers gone. I notice particularly that he has a brown face, much wrinkled about the eyes and that the head of him is as hairless as an onion.

The two guards range him in front of the table where the big Heinie is sitting. Howsoever, just then a couple of machine guns open up with a scandalous racket right outside and one of the Krauts runs to the door and pokes his head out. Then he comes back and orates with gestures to the man at the table but I do not get the drift of his talk. I guess, though, that the outfit is now putting on the diversion which me and Lootenant McPherson had arranged for—the time being just about right. Said diversion will be wasted, I think sadly, since, while I am hiding behind a bunk, I am in a poor position for shooting off such things as rockets and the outfit will not advance until they see such a signal.

I GATHER that the feller at the table is indulging himself in considerable bad language because he waves his arms around and four of his men go on out, leaving two to guard the bald-headed Yank. I nudge young Herraty with me elbow then and I can feel him stiffen. I wait for a minute longer to make me play though, because the big Heinie is speaking and in English.

"What is your name, soldier?" he asks.

"Christopher Columbo," the bald-headed feller says.

The big Heinie scowls. "Do you keep a civil tongue in the head of you," he snarls. "What is the number of your regiment?"

"No spika English," the Yank tells him.

The big Heinie stands up suddenly and I can see that he is mad. "Grandpappy," he begins, "you will . . ."

There is a sudden gleam in the eye of the bald-headed man and I realize that there is an accident about to be perpetrated. It happens suddenly, just as me and young Herraty come out of the corner on the jump.

"Grandpappy, eh?" says the Yank.

He grabs the rifle away from the big Kraut, who has been guarding him on the left, before

that worthy knows that anything is happening at all. "Grandpappy!" says the Yank and he puts the steel butt plate of the piece into the teeth of that feller behind the table. That butt plate makes a nice scrunchy sound.

Well, all of a sudden there is a considerable melee, so to speak. The other Kraut starts to swing his own rifle up into a shooting position but the Yank gives him a kick on the kneecap so that he howls like a wolf and topples over sideways. Then me and young Herraty arrive on the scene and assist in taking the situation in hand—not that this bald-headed feller hadn't been doing very nice all by himself.

The thing does not take long. We disarm the three Heinies and set 'em down back in one corner with young Herraty to guard 'em. Then I go back to the table where the candle is still burning and I find that the bald-headed feller has been rooting around and has found a bottle of schnapps. He worries out the cork and then tips the bottle above the mouth of him.

"Woof!" he says presently, putting the bottle down and looking at me. "A good evening to you, O'Hare. Maybe you will be explaining how it is that I find you in Grimpaux Farm, the same which has been holding up the advance of "C" Company for the six hours past?"

The effrontery of the man is a wonderful thing to behold.

"O. Smith," I say—for I have recognized that it is he—"do you put down yon bottle and lend your aid while we barricade this door. There is no telling when the rest of these Heinies may take it into the heads of them to come back and I am thinking that they are apt to be unpleasant about the whole business."

O. Smith takes another big drink. *"Arragh!"* he says. "It tastes worse than did McCudden's Monongahela. What is this talk of barricades, O'Hare?"

"Do you imagine that the three of us can fight the whole of the German army, O. Smith?" I ask him.

"Why not?" he says quite testily.

"'Tis the schnapps which is eating at the brain of you," I answer him. "We will barricade ourselves here and wait for reinforcements."

"Nope," he says, "not me. I have come out here this night to clean up Grimpaux Farm—it being apparent that the same is too tough a job for "B" Company to handle. Personally, I have always considered "B" Company to be a bit on the Sunday school side anyway."

Well, the thing does not make sense and I pick up the bottle for I feel the need to take something to restore me perspective, so to speak. The liquor tastes like melted iron slag but it warms me and I feel better. O. Smith is going toward the door.

"Do you wait a minute," I say to him, re-

INSECTS GIVE

60 watt
25c

100 watt
35c

FOR PORCHES—
GARDENS...WHERE
PEOPLE MEET

NOW
AVAILABLE!

Discontinued after "Pearl Harbor", but now again available in two sizes, 60 and 100 watts. Now, you can enjoy your summer evenings out-of-doors with ample light and a minimum of night flying insects.

● On sale at neighborhood stores, this new lamp bulb is easily available. Just try one today. Prove to yourself and family its merit—then only—buy more.

Attractive Folder
Sent FREE Upon
Request—Write NOW

VERD-A-RAY
TOLEDO 5, OHIO

signed. "If you must go I will go with you."

"Suit yourself," he says over the shoulder of him. "I would not cheat a man out of a good fight, O'Hare."

Well, the next few minutes are still considerable confused in the mind of me. We go out. The machine guns are playing Hail-Columbia-Happy-Land in the dark and bullets are ricocheting off the stone buildings with a *wheech* which is some unpleasant to listen to.

"Come on, O'Hare," this O. Smith says happily.

To make a long story short we run down a machine gun where it is set up in an angle of the wall and we liquidate the crew of it after as pretty a scrap as you are likely to find from here to there. Personally, I almost get meself pistoled at close range, a bullet taking away a piece of me left ear during the argument. Howsoever, after a little, the gun is lying over on its side and its crew is completely *hors de combat* and that is that, in a manner of speaking.

"Come on, O'Hare," says this O. Smith. "From the sound of it there is another one down here. We should have the time of our lives this night!"

Well, the schnapps is working well within me by this time. I feel about seven feet tall and only wish that it is cannons that we have to fight instead of measly little machine guns. So I follow at the gallop and then bring up short against something which is soft but solid in the dark. I recoil sharply and rest for a minute upon the seat of me pants.

"Why the hell do you not watch where you are going, you clumsy such-and-such?" a voice says, low but distinct.

I AM glad to hear that voice because it belongs to Red Gunnar whom I have left with the detail back in the ravine. I answer him quickly, not wishing to be mistook for a Kraut and get a foot of steel into me as a consequence.

"Red Gunnar!" I say. "'Tis Sergint O'Hare speaking. Have you the two squads with you?"

"They are over there by the fence behind you," he tells me. "We were held up some by the shelling."

"No matter. Do you take the first squad and work off along the wall to the left while I will

"Grandpappy, eh?" says the Yank and grabs the rifle away from the big Kraut on his left.

take the second and do likewise to the right. We will disturb the internal arrangements of Grimpaux Farm considerable while we go. Is it understood?"

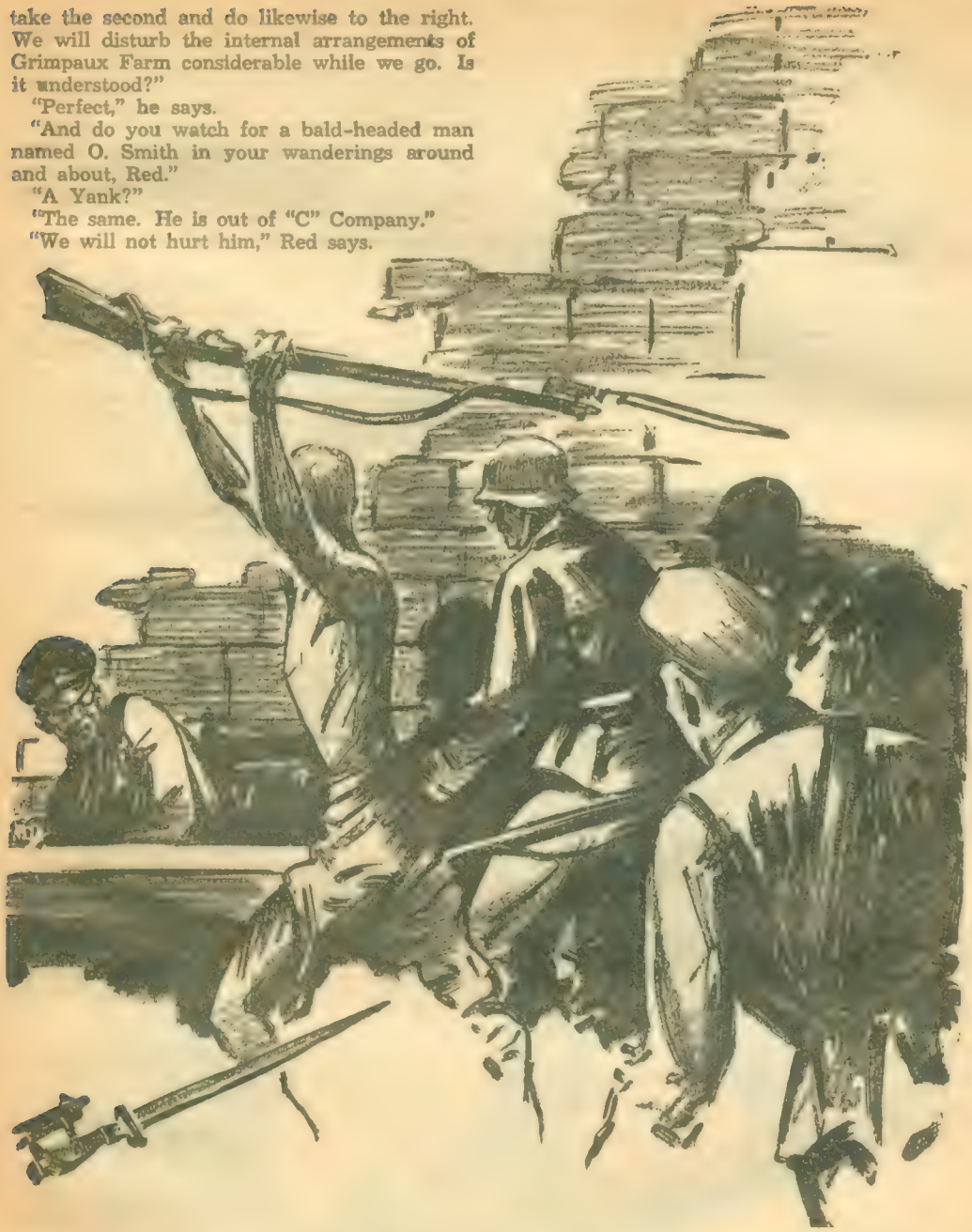
"Perfect," he says.

"And do you watch for a bald-headed man named O. Smith in your wanderings around and about, Red."

"A Yank?"

"The same. He is out of "C" Company."

"We will not hurt him," Red says.



I tell him sourly, "'Tis not afraid of that that I am. Do you see to it, however, that he does not hurt *you*."

I take out me Very pistol then, and I fire two cartridges into the air—the signal which me and Lootenant McPherson had agreed upon—and then the lot of us moves on about the business which is at hand. I know that the signals have been seen, for presently the artillery begins to put a concentration down between us and the rest of the German line and flares start going up here and there.

Well, for some minutes we have the prettiest little scrap there in that farmyard that you would ever care to see. Then the rest of the company comes helling in through the front door and the lot of us start hunting Krauts—the same which have gone into their holes with

enthusiasm—with considerable *elan*, as the Frogs would put it. This Grimpaux Farm is like an ant hill and we fish Heinies out of nooks and crannies like you would fish beans out of a pot. I have not seen O. Smith again but I have been too busy to worry about the little man. Anyway, I have no doubt but that he can take care of himself.

Three of us are working around to where we can get at half a dozen Heinies who have barricaded themselves in an angle of the wall, and who are stubborn about surrendering, when a big flare goes off right above the farm. It is just dying out when I notice something maybe twenty yards away and close to the east wall. It is the bald-headed man, O. Smith, and he is engaged at the moment in fighting with three Germans, any one of whom would have made two of the little man.

Well, the light is dying out fast but before it goes I see one of the Heinies swing down a gun butt on O. Smith's uncovered head. The little man goes down and I think that that is the last of O. Smith. I am sorry, for I have come to have a certain liking for him and so, busy as I am at the moment, I find time to bung a forty-five slug at the big ox who has clouted him. Then the dark comes down thick again and I have the hands of me full with me own party and can pay no further attention to O. Smith.

It is close to daylight when we finally get that farm cleaned out all proper. We have fifty-seven prisoners and there are as many more lying around among the stone buildings. I am feeling tired and maybe a little old as I go back to the stone out-building where, earlier in the night, me and young Herraty had took refuge, so to speak, from the shell fire.

Well, I go in through the door and the first thing I see is a candle still burning on the table. Then I see that a man is setting there—furthermore, he is tipping a bottle above the mouth of him. It is the bald-headed man, O. Smith.

I stand there in the doorway for maybe a minute, not knowing anything better to do for I have figured the little man to be lying out there in the farmyard with the skull of him batted in considerable. I see that is not so because he puts the bottle down and stretches out his legs comfortably and then, so help me Hannah, he begins to sing. His voice is not much

I see one of the Heinies swing down a gun butt on O. Smith's uncovered head.

to write home about, being thin and a little cracked, but the tune and the words of his song take me back across more years than I like to think about.

"Ould soldiers never die, never die, never die,
Ould soldiers never die . . . they just march away."

Well, I go on in and I find me a box and I sit upon it, facing him. One side of his face is a bloody smear and the scalp of him has a four-inch slit in it. His blouse is completely gone now and I can see the wrinkles of age about the base of his neck. Howsoever, he takes another drink of the schnapps, looks at me and suddenly I remember the wild and reckless look in the eyes of a man back on the banks of Kooskia Creek in the Palouse country.

"You are Sergint Harney," I say softly.

"The same," he tells me gaily. "Why, I recognized you the minute I set the eyes of me upon that red head and ugly puss, O'Hare. You have grown no handsomer since the day that I rode you back to your father, a good man with whom I have fought many's the grand fight down in Cuba."

"Then you *are* Sergint Gregg Harney?" I ask him, the great baboon that I am.

"Aye," he tells me, "and why not? Do you think that wars are made only for babies that have not yet learned to keep the noses of them clean, O'Hare?"

"It is remembering, that I am," I say to him, "of reading the orders of your retirement fifteen years ago. By all rights you should be dead and in the grave of you."

He smiles at me across the bloody face of him and lifts the schnapps bottle. "Ould soldiers never die, young O'Hare," he says to me.

WELL, the end of it does not take long to tell.

We finish up the Roer fight—them of us that are left—and we go into reserve back around La Pierre. One day I am drinking a bit of wine with Terry McHenry, who is still top kick of Company "C".

"This O. Smith," I say to Terry McHenry after a while. "What has become of him?"

"The papers of him have not come through to this day," Terry tells me bitterly. "The matter has caused me no end of trouble."

"This O. Smith has no further explanation?"

"I would not know," Terry says, still bitter. "He has been AWOL for close to a month. 'Tis doubting I am that his name is O. Smith at all."

The words of a man come back to me then across the years and I say softly, "It may be that he changes his name with his wars, Terry."

Presently we go back up and then comes the big German offensive in December which is somewhat worse than anything I have ever seen.

Well, one night we are moving back from around Bastogne, having been pretty badly shot up, and we pass another outfit going in. It is a good outfit and one that bears a great reputation wherever fighting men gather.

We straighten our ranks and go past 'em proudly for we, too, are now a combat division as good as the best. We watch them out of the corners of our eyes, though, for after all there is only one Umpteenth.

It is a strange thing and it is over in maybe a minute. While I am watching, a company goes by with a scrape of feet through the snow and mud and the muted rattle of a mess kit which has worked loose in its pouch. Also there is the sullen grumble of the guns up front but I hear more than that. It is the snatch of a song, sung in a high and a quavering voice, which I catch as the company clumps on by.

"Ould soldiers never die, never die, never die,
Ould soldiers never die . . . they just march away."

Well, likely the story which Tim Mulcahy tells me at Paddy Dolan's wake is made up out of whole cloth for the Mulcahys have ever been great liars. Still, if you were to substitute O. Smith for J. Caesar there might be something to it. Personally I do not know.

THE LOST TOES

I just stood there, froze in my tracks, looking at Uncle Wiley's foot spewing forth blood.

WHEN my Uncle Wiley Creech let his chopping axe slip and cut three toes off his right foot that day, he didn't r'ar and cuss and take on like some. My Uncle Wiley was a big, solemn, patient sort of man, and I guess he'd let my Aunt Severance do the bulk of the talking so long that he'd got out of the habit. Or maybe the sight of all that blood spurting out of his slashed shoe top shocked him silent. Anyhow, he didn't say a word.

And I didn't. It didn't even come to me right then what a pickle that axe slip had put me in. Even if it had, there wouldn't have been anything to say.

I just stood there, froze in my tracks, watch-

OF UNCLE WILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE WERT

By FRED GIPSON

ing Uncle Wiley bend over and lay that chopping axe on the grass as careful as he would have put down a fine-shooting squirrel gun. Even with three toes cut off, Uncle Wiley wasn't taking any chances on maybe nicking the keen edge of that axe against a rock. My Aunt Severance always claimed that if Uncle Wiley had been as gentle with his womenfolks as he was with his work tools, life could have been a lot easier for her to put up with. But that was kitchen talk; Uncle Wiley was mighty gentle with everything, seemed to me like.

With his axe safe on the ground, Uncle Wiley sat back on the mesquite tree he'd cut down and eased the shoe off his foot. He wasn't a man to worry with socks in warm weather, so right off we could see the damage. The axe hadn't quite cut through; his three middle toes still hung to his foot by narrow strips of flesh. They sure were spewing blood.

Still silent, Uncle Wiley got out his pocket knife and cut the strings of flesh, letting the toes fall to the ground one at a time. Then he got out his snuff can, emptied it inside his

underlip and started working at the bulge with his tongue.

"Now, Tooter," he said, speaking calm, "you go get your Aunt Severance down here."

I tore out for the house. I stepped in a patch of goathead burrs that felt like red hot spikes driving into my bare feet, but I just raked my foot against a bunch of broomweeds to drag the burrs loose and kept humping it. The sight of all that blood sure had throwed a scare into me.

Uncle Wiley's cabin sat on a knoll above Bluff Creek, backed up against a grove of tall live-oaks. I heard the squall of the well-pulley and headed for the back yard. I found Aunt Severance drawing a bucket of water.

"Hurry!" I panted. "It's Uncle Wiley. He's cut his foot down yonder past the cattle tank and he's bleeding to death!"

Aunt Severance stared at me, her blue eyes getting wide and round as an owl's in her lean face. Then she said, "Oh, Lord!" and turned loose her grip on the chain. She grabbed her apron, threw it up over her face and ran toward the house, hollering, "Salina! Salina!" in a thin, scared voice.

The well-pulley started squalling again, louder and louder, as the full bucket dropped back into the well. The chain rattled against the guard and the empty bucket on the other end of the chain bonged against the sides of the well as it came up. Then there was a big booming splash at the bottom and the pulley quit squalling.

Inside the house I could hear Salina's light feet hitting the gallery floor as she went out the front way. Salina was Uncle Wiley's grown girl. She was pretty as a New Year's calendar, with her light curly hair and big brown eyes. She could sure run fast, too.

Me, I lit a shuck for Aunt Dicy Cole's place up on Deer Run Creek, without even being told. When it come to bad trouble, everybody called on Aunt Dicy Cole. They claimed a city doctor couldn't hold a candle to Aunt Dicy.

I was full of worriment on that mile-and-a-half run. Uncle Wiley's trouble was sure piling up on him lately. Last spring, one of his work mules had just up and died for no good reason. And the grasshoppers had plagued his corn crop till all he'd gathered this fall was three wagonloads of whirlwind nubbins, hardly fit to feed a fattening hog, much less use for bread corn. And then less than a week before, his other mule had got a spell on, had pawed a milk calf in the head and killed it. Now he'd chopped three toes off his right foot. . .

What takened the heart out of me was how my troubles was all tied up with Uncle Wiley's. A couple of years back, my folks had takened down with the fever and died and I'd went to stay with my Uncle Titus Creech and his woman, Teeny. But when Uncle Titus wasn't fighting his whiskey jug, he was whaling the tar out of me for not keeping up with his field work, till finally I got a bellyful of it and run off to come stay with Uncle Wiley. And Uncle Wiley was proud to have me. Only, now, with all this trouble piling up, he was bothered about winter rations. Maybe he could keep me on and maybe he couldn't.

I'd heard him and Aunt Severance talking it over one night and Aunt Severance didn't see how we could all manage on three loads of whirlwind nubbins and a couple of fattening hogs. Uncle Wiley had admitted the going was getting rough, but that if Salina would ever make up her mind which one of the Gooch boys she aimed to marry—and marry him—then everything would be jake. There'd be enough rations to go around.

But it didn't look like Salina could get her mind made up. Terminus Gooch would come sparking her one night and then his brother Shad the next, till their saddle horses had deep holes stomped out around the front-yard gate. But Salina just kept right on walling sick-calf eyes at one and then the other.

Uncle Wiley got tired of it and told Salina one night he figured it was time for her to shoot or quit aiming, but Aunt Severance shut him up quick, claiming a girl was taking on too much sorrow and trouble when she married to jump into it blindfolded.

So that's the way it stacked up. It sure looked like a hard winter coming on for Tooter Creech unless Aunt Dicy Cole could do something about it.

AUNT DICY'S shack was back up in the cedars, and when I rounded a bend in the trail, I saw her old man, Nevershed, sitting out on the front gallery and sawing his fiddle, like folks claimed he'd been doing every day since Aunt Dicy married him forty year ago. Nevershed had a bald head and lots of gray whiskers and he fiddled left-handed, down on the coarse strings where the music was low and lonesome. He twisted his head to keep from spitting tobacco juice across his fiddle, then saw me and lifted his bow.

"Where's Aunt Dicy?" I asked, soon as I could get my breath. "Uncle Wiley's cut three toes off with his chopping axe and he's bleeding to death!"

Nevershed turned his face toward the cedar hills, looked sad and spit again. "Tooter," he said, "don't never marry a good-hearted woman. She'll starve you to a shadder. She'll allus be off midwifing or laying the dead out on the cooling boards or trying to stop somebody's bleeding. You'll never have a decent meal on your table if you marry that kind."

He tucked his fiddle back under his chin and lifted his bow. "You'll find my Dicy helping Beetle Hood's woman," he said and started playing again.

I was crying a little by the time I reached Beetle Hood's shack over on the next ridge. It was that fiddle music, the way it kept trailing me through the cedars, whimpering and moaning at my heels. I guessed a man could get mighty sad, waiting forty year for his woman to cook him a decent meal's vittles.

Beetle Hood came out of his shack to call off his dogs. He wore a lot of bother in his face. Aunt Dicy Cole pushed through behind him, then shoved the door closed. But that didn't shut out the groans I could hear coming from inside, though.

"It's Uncle Wiley," I told Aunt Dicy. "He's cut three toes off with his chopping axe. He's needing help bad."

Aunt Dicy was a big woman. She sagged everywhere she could sag and her petticoat always had a tag end hanging out from under her dress. But to a body in bad trouble there was sure a lot of comfort in her brown eyes.

She turned and looked at Beetle. Beetle, he looked at her and then looked down at the floor.

Aunt Dicy said, "I can't go now, Tooter. Beetle's woman is due any time now. She's laboring hard."

Panic hit me. "But Uncle Wiley'll bleed to death!" I said. "You can't let Uncle Wiley just lay there and bleed to death!"

Aunt Dicy looked put out. "A body can't be two places at once," she said. "You tell Severance to use turpentine and spider web, like I showed her the time Salina stabbed her leg with a butcher knife. That'll stop the bleeding. I'll come soon as I finish with Beetle's woman and the baby."

Beetle looked relieved. But me—I didn't like it. I didn't see how we could make out without Aunt Dicy Cole.

I'd turned to go when Aunt Dicy called me back. "Where's them toes Wiley cut off?" she wanted to know.

"Why," I said, "I guess they're laying there on the ground beside that corner post he was trimming up."

Aunt Dicy rolled her eyes toward the roof. "Land of Moses!" she said. "Now ain't that just like a man? Tooter, you skin out for home and bury them toes, fast as you can. Put 'em in a box and bury 'em. If something's et them toes or the ants ever get to 'em, he'll go pain crazy. Now hightail it! And recollect about the turpentine and spider web."

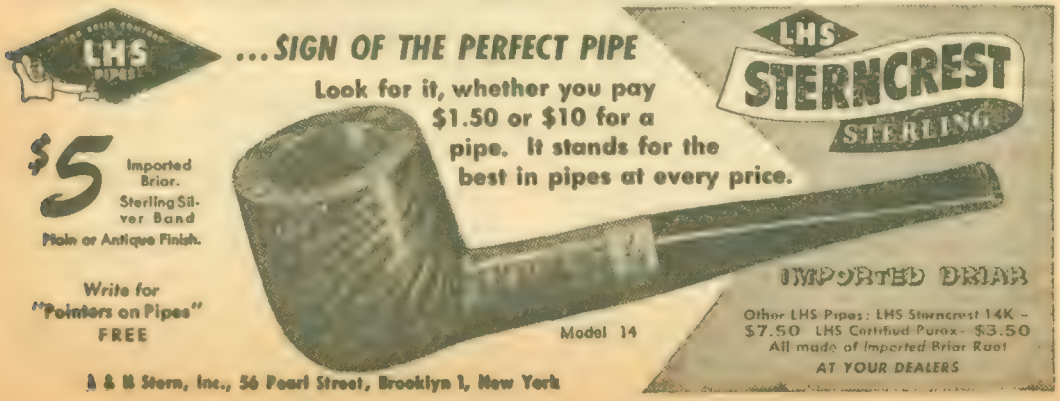
I was done wore to a frazzle, but I run ever' step of the way home. Maybe we could save Uncle Wiley yet.

The saddle horses of both the Gooch brothers were stomping their holes deeper beside the front-yard gate when I got there. Terminus Gooch sat on the front gallery, whittling shavings from a post that held up the roof. His brother Shad was squatted out in the yard, beating red ants to death with Aunt Severance's battling stick. Both of them were long, tall, dark-faced men who didn't waste much breath talking. Terminus was the longest and tallest, but he was the youngest.

I came trotting through the gate and their dogs got up off the ground long enough to grin at me and wag lazy tails before they flopped back down. Terminus said, "Howdy, Tooter," and Shad said, "Howdy, Tooter," and I said, "Howdy" to both of them at once and went on in the house. They got up and followed me.

Uncle Wiley lay across the bed with his bloody foot hanging over the edge. Aunt Severance was trying to stop the bleeding with a pan of cold well water, while Salina just stood there holding Uncle Wiley's hand and crying. Salina sure did think a heap of her daddy. I thought maybe that was the reason she was so slow about leaving him to marry one of the Gooch boys.

I told Aunt Severance about Aunt Dicy being tied up with Beetle Hood's woman and what she'd said about the turpentine and spider web, then I hurried off to bury Uncle Wiley's toes. Shad and Terminus, they started to follow me, then began to follow Salina toward the smokehouse for spider web, then looked at each other and finally went back outside to continue whit-


LHS
...SIGN OF THE PERFECT PIPE
Look for it, whether you pay $1.50 or $10 for a pipe. It stands for the best in pipes at every price.
LHS
STERNCREST
STERLING
$5
Imported Briar.
Sterling Silver Band
Plain or Antique Finish.
Write for "Pointers on Pipes" FREE
IMPORTED BRIAR
Other LHS Pipes: LHS Sterncrest 14K - $7.50 LHS Certified Purex - $3.50
All made of Imported Briar Root
AT YOUR DEALERS
Model 14
A & M Stern, Inc., 56 Pearl Street, Brooklyn 1, New York

tling on the gallery post and killing red ants again. It was just their dogs that followed me. One was an old clumsy hound pup, all ears and feet, that belonged to Shad and the other was a big blue-spotted coon-hound, belonging to Terminus.

It sure did chill me to pick up Uncle Wiley's toes, but I had it to do. I buried them as quick as I could. I pulled a couple of ants off one and put them all in the snuff can Uncle Wiley had throwed away when he'd emptied it. Then I buried them in the sand of a dry wash and marked the place with a chunk of clear quartz rock.

Shad's pup, Spuddy, he went up to sniff the place and started to dig, but I kicked him in the ribs and he changed his mind.

UNCLE GABRIEL CREECH was unhooking his mule team when I got back to the house and his womenfolks were climbing out of the wagon and hurrying into the house. Down the rocky slant back of the barn I heard the rattle of buggy wheels and knowed that'd be Jacob Horn and his folks coming. I wondered how word had got around so fast about Uncle Wiley losing his toes. But it always was like that along Bluff Creek. Quick as somebody takened to his sick bed, seemed like everybody in the country knowed about it inside of an hour and came to set up.

I wondered for a minute how come nobody'd gone to set up with Beetle Hood's woman till I recollected Beetle was said to have Mormon leanings and nobody but Aunt Dicy would have anything to do with them. Aunt Dicy didn't seem to have no religion when it come to trouble.

By sundown, there were five wagon teams and seven saddle horses and mules tied up around the house and there were men and women and young uns and dogs milling around all over the place. It sure kept me stepping, running and fetching for Aunt Severance and trying to feed all them teams and milking the cows and doing the other night chores that I'd always just helped Uncle Wiley with before.

Aunt Severance had finished cooking supper and Salina was feeding the folks in shifts at the kitchen table before I got a chance to go in and see how Uncle Wiley was making out. The turpentine and spider web had the bleeding about stopped, all right, but I could see Uncle Wiley was sure hurting. His face was gray and sweaty in the yellow lamplight and he kept wallowing around in his bedclothes, moving his foot this way and that, trying to ease it.

Aunt Severance had a chair pulled up close to his bed and was bent over him, talking low, so she wouldn't be heard above the talk and rattle of the eating tools in the kitchen.

"I just don't know what we're going to do, Wiley," she was saying. "All of 'em piling in here and eating us out of house and home. At the rate they're tucking it away, that barrel of flour'll be gone in a couple of days and we'll have to butcher a hog before tomorrow night."

I could see the lines deepen in Uncle Wiley's face.

"All right, Severance," he said. "If it takes a barrel of flour and a fattening hog to see us through this, we'll use 'em. We can't slight good friends and borrowing neighbors. Not when they've taken time off from their crops to come set up with me."

Aunt Severance looked desperate. "But we'll be stripped of our winter rations before cold weather sets in," she said.

Uncle Wiley gave his woman the hardest look I ever seen him give her. "We'll make out," he told her. And Aunt Severance left the room without a word of back-talk.

I turned and went out into the dark. Uncle Wiley was a prideful man and I couldn't quarrel with him on the stand he'd taken. But that didn't keep a big chunk of ice from freezing up inside me. All the time I'd been sort of hoping something would turn up to keep me from having to go back to Uncle Titus Creech's for the winter. Now I knowed my luck had run out.

Aunt Severance and Salina washed up the supper dishes. The men all went back outside to squat around and talk and whittle and stab their knife blades into the ground. The women went back and sat around Uncle Wiley's bed and listened to Aunt Teeny Creech tell about how one of her second cousins by her first marriage got wild-hog cut in the leg one time and crawled three miles on his hands and knees, leaving a blood trail every foot of the way before he finally bled to death.

Seemed like some of the womenfolks could have helped Salina and Aunt Severance with the dishes, but they never made a move.

The kids were all inside and out of the house, running and hollering and cutting up, like kids will. Three dog fights started on the front gallery inside of an hour.

Out in the dark, around some of the wagons, I could hear older girls giggling and men talking low and I knowed there was some romancing going on. I peeped around and listened a little, hoping maybe Salina had slipped out and was doing some of it. But then I saw both the Gooch boys standing in the doorway, propping up the walls, and knowed she was still inside.

And all the time, Uncle Wiley just kept squirming and twisting in his bed, getting grayer and grayer in the face ever' time I looked in on him.

"It's them toes," he finally groaned. "They're all stuck together and burning like live coals was agin 'em."

Some of the women's eyes popped out and they took deep breaths. Aunt Severance said,

I could hear older girls giggling and men talking low and I knowed there was some romancing going on.

held them. Nobody had ever heard Uncle Wiley cuss in front of his womenfolks before. He was bound to be taking a turn for the worse.

Aunt Severance hurried over to me, scare showing plain in her eyes. "You buried them toes, Tooter?" she asked.

"Just like Aunt Dicy told me," I said.

For a minute I was sick inside, thinking maybe I'd left some ants on Uncle Wiley's toes and they were biting. But I knowed better. I'd been rattled, but I'd picked them toes clean of ants. I could recollect that.

"But Wiley, them toes can't be hurtin' you—they're cut off and buried!"

"The hell they can't!" Uncle Wiley railed out suddenly. "Dammit, they're my toes and I know when they're hurtin'. I tell you they're on fire!"

Aunt Severance dodged back, looking like he'd hit her between the eyes with a club, and all the other folks sucked in quick breaths and

Aunt Severance glanced around the room with a sort of hopeless look on her face. Salina put her hand on Uncle Wiley's forehead.

"He's fevering," she said. "I'll go draw a bucket of cold water."

She ran out of the house so quick I knowed she was fixing to cry again. I heard Terminus Gooch cuss low and his brother Shad sort of growl. Then they both went outside to help Salina draw the water.

If the cold water helped Uncle Wiley, nobody could tell it. His fever got higher and higher and he talked more and more about how them toes of his were sticking together and

burning like they had salt in the raw places. By midnight, he was hollering and cussing till it was shameful and Aunt Severance had to hold him down in his bed. By this time sleep got a dead grip on me and I piled in the bed of Hart Spiller's wagon.

HE WAS still at it, Uncle Wiley was, when Aunt Severance came and shook me awake at daybreak. Aunt Severance looked like she hadn't slept a wink and I guess she hadn't. Her raw eyes and drawn face made me feel sort of bad for sleeping while Uncle Wiley lay hurting, but I couldn't have done anything even if I had stayed awake.

Aunt Severance claimed she needed help to cut down a high-hanging hog ham, so I went with her. The folks that'd come to set up with Uncle Wiley were all still asleep. They were scattered all over the front gallery and yard, still snoring away. We took care and picked our way through them and rounded the corner of the smokehouse just in time to see Terminus Gooch's old big spotted coon-hound, Tater, sneak out the door, making off with the very hog ham Aunt Severance had aimed to breakfast the bunch on.

Tater, he saw us about the same time we spotted him. He tucked his tail under him, tore out through the back-yard gate and headed for the brush. Aunt Severance hollered, "Drop that ham, you wretch!" and took out after him. I took out after her and then out came Salina through the kitchen door, waving a broom, to throw in with us.

But we were whipped before we got started. I wouldn't have thought there was a dog in the country could have jumped high enough to pull that hog ham down or been stout enough to run with it after he did. But that Tater hound done it and outrun the three of us, slick as a whistle.

Aunt Severance cried for the first time on the way back. And when Salina stepped over Terminus Gooch, where he lay asleep in front of the doorsteps, she handed him a look that would have sure withered him if he'd been awake.

They et middlin' meat for breakfast.

Me, I couldn't eat anything. Not with Uncle Wiley lying in the next room, moaning and hollering, and me with no place to go, come winter, but back to Uncle Titus and Aunt Teeny. I went off and milked the cows to keep anybody from seeing me bawl.

I was stripping the last cow when I heard Aunt Dicy Cole call, "Tooter! You come here, Tooter!"

I left the strippings to the calf and hit for the house on the run. I didn't like the way Aunt Dicy was calling me. But just knowing she'd come was a big help.

Old Nevershed Cole was just settling down on the front gallery with his fiddle when I tore across the front yard. I ran past him into the house. Aunt Dicy was bent over Uncle Wiley's foot, washing it and fixing it up. She was sweating and breathing hard, like she always does when she's been walking. Aunt Dicy had a lot of weight to pack around and it wore her down mighty fast to be on her feet. She looked up at me and dragged a string of wet hair out of her tired eyes.

"Tooter," she said, "what'd you do with them toes of your Uncle Wiley's?"

I had to swallow twice before I could answer. I hadn't been easy in my mind about them toes since last night. "Why," I said, "I buried them, Aunt Dicy, just like you said."

"Sure, I know," Aunt Dicy panted, "but how'd you bury 'em? How'd you fix 'em up? What'd you put 'em in?"

I had to swallow some more. Seemed like I just couldn't stand having all them people staring at me. "Why, I put 'em in an empty snuff can," I said. "One Uncle Wiley throwed away. I just put them in it and buried them."

Aunt Dicy rolled her eyes toward the ceiling. "The good Lord have mercy!" she puffed. "What mortal pain the man's suffered due to ignorance. Fresh snuff, a-scorching and a-searing them toes all night!"

I busted out crying. I couldn't help it. "But you said to put them in a box," I said. "You said to!"

Aunt Dicy came and caught me up in a hug that almost cut off my wind. "Now, now, Tooter!" she said. "You couldn't a-knowed. A little old feller like you. . . Now run dig them toes up quick and your old Aunt Dicy'll have 'em fixed up right in a minute."

Salina and the Gooch brothers and half the rest of the men and boys followed me. But I ran fast and beat them all to the place where I'd buried Uncle Wiley's toes. Then I just stood in my tracks and tried to die.

There was the dry sandy wash. There was the chunk of clear quartz crystal I'd used to mark the place. And there was the hole in the sand.

Uncle Wiley's toes were gone!

The rest of the bunch came and stood and looked at the hole. Nobody said a thing. From up at the house, old Nevershed Cole's fiddle music drifted down through the mesquites, moaning and weeping.

Terminus Gooch finally knelt and examined the dog tracks around the hole, then looked up at his brother Shad.

"It was your dog Spuddy what done it!" he said.

Shad Gooch's mouth dropped open. He looked around till he met Salina's eyes and Salina, she busted out crying. It seemed like Shad Gooch just sort of shriveled up.

After a while, Terminus got up and brushed the sand off his Sunday pants. "He couldn't of

I went off and milked the cows to keep anybody from seeing me cry.

et 'em," he said. "He couldn't of got the lid off that snuff box!" He looked at me. "The lid was on tight, wasn't it?"

I nodded. That was all I could do. I couldn't say a word.

"Well," said Terminus, "it's just up to us to search it out."

"The chances are sure slim," Hart Spiller pointed out. "After an old scalawag pup's packed it around and played with it all night. It could be anywhere between here and yonder."

NOBODY ever said a truer speech. We scattered out and hunted. We searched that dry wash for a quarter of a mile each way. We looked beside every log and rock and tree and stump. We dug into what skunk and armadillo holes we came across. We moved on up to the house and called on every man and woman and kid to come help.

We raked the cowpen clean with a garden rake. We combed every square foot of the yard. We stomped down half the turnip patch.

We sent some of the littlest kids crawling under the house to search and one of Finus Camp's tow-heads got stuck and we had to prize up part of the kitchen floor to get him out.

And all the time, them toes we couldn't find was tormenting the life out of Uncle Wiley.

"You just got to find 'em," Aunt Dicy kept prodding. "The pore soul won't have another minute's rest till we get them toes pulled apart and the snuff washed off."

But we couldn't find them. Uncle Wiley's hollering and raving drove us like a mule whip. Old Nevershed's fiddle music was crying and begging. But nowhere we looked could we find where that pup Spuddy had lost Uncle Wiley's toes.

Finally, the bulk of the folks give it up and went back to sit in the shade of the yard trees and shake their heads and whittle and stab their pocket knives into the ground. There was only me and Salina and the Gooch boys left. And then Shad, he quit, went in and got Aunt Severance's battling stick and began beating red ants to death against the ground again.

That started Salina to crying, and Terminus, he got mad and jumped Shad out about it, and Shad, he told Terminus to dry up and quit pestering him.

"I'm a-thinkin'!" Shad said and went right on beating his red ants.

So me'n Salina and Terminus went back to hunting, with Salina still sniffling and Terminus shooting black looks at his brother now and then. But I knowed Shad was thinking hard. I could tell by the frown on his face and the way he kept rapping them red ants so hard with that battling stick.

It was coming on dinner time when Aunt Severance called to us. She needed Salina to help her in the kitchen, she said, and she wanted me to go gather up the eggs I'd forgot the night before. And that's when Shad Gooch jerked to his feet like an ant had stung him and throwed down the battling stick.

"That's it!" he barked. "Eggs!" And he came on the run.

"Tooter!" he said, his eyes shining. "Show me where your hen nests are. Every one."

I thought he'd gone crazier than Uncle Wiley and, from the looks the balance of the crowd handed him, they must have thought so, too. But Shad paid them no mind. He kept after me till I started leading him from one hen nest to the other. The crowd followed, even Aunt Severance.

It was the fourth nest that had been robbed, the one down past the cowpen in that clump of cockleburrs. Some varmint had located it during the night, had et all the eggs and scattered the shells around.

But that was the nest Shad Gooch was looking for. He shoved me away and got down on all-fours to rake amongst the trash and broken shells with his hands till he found what he wanted. It was the snuff can holding Uncle Wiley's toes!

Salina saw it first. She let out a little moaning whimper, said, "Oh, Shad!" and put both arms around his neck.

Aunt Severance, she snatched the can out of

(Continued on page 146)

A Fact Story

Fuses are lighted and the man who has nerve enough to hold his stick of dynamite the longest wins the contest.

POWDER MAN

By NORMAN FLANDER

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

MAKING dynamite isn't fun. Let's get that established first. I thought it would be when I first went to work in the Du Pont plant at Ashburn, Missouri several years ago when I was a fresh, brash young punk who liked the feel of danger. But I found out different the morning Lige Taggert was killed.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning. Three of us, Dutch Ploesser, Gene Holland and I, were packing in the gelatin packing house. We were on the hump because of a rush order. Gene and I did the packing and Dutch, the foreman, ran the nailer.

On your left there is a long table running back to the nailer. In front of you is a pair of scales set at fifty pounds. On your right are the long wooden boxes of dynamite sticks as they come from the "punching house." You set an empty box on the scales, scoop up a double handful of sticks and, with one motion, set them evenly in the box. When the scales tip at fifty you turn and slide the box back to the nailer and reach for another empty. A good man can pack a box a minute.

I was new and jumpy then and sometimes, in a rush, one of the boxes would slide crooked. When it did I'd hold my breath till it hit the

floor. Gene and Dutch would laugh at me but I wasn't yet "powder hardened" like they were. I knew enough about dynamite to know that it's tricky stuff to handle. You can bounce it, beat it and even burn it in your cook stove a hundred times and then the next time—*wham!* Then, as Old John, one of the Serbian workers in the plant, used to put it, "You go old country—one minute!"

I had just sent a box back to the nailer and was reaching for an empty when it came. The whole world seemed to blow up in my face. I felt the floor rise and fall like a boat in a storm and then the pile of empties back of me covered me. I scrambled out of them, dazed, and made my way to the door. Gene and Dutch were already outside. At the entrance to the barricade I put my hand against the wall to steady myself and something wet and sticky oozed through my fingers. I didn't have to wonder what it was. I *knew* it was mangled human flesh.

Just outside our barricade where the wooden tracks ran from the nitro storehouse to the mixing house, there was a deep smoking crater at least fifty feet across. The heavily-wooded hillside above was swept clean. I knew then what had happened. Lige Taggert and the "Hearse" had gone up. Only the heavy barricade of twelve-by-twelve timbers, cribbed to hold earth and rock, had saved us.

The "Hearse" I'd better explain, was the little cart in which the raw nitro was hauled from the nitro storehouse to the mixing house. It had been pulled by a flea-bitten old mule named Hells Bells.

Men began to run past me headed for the railroad tracks which led to Ashburn. I knew that every man, woman and child in Ashburn who could run would be running up the tracks to meet them. That was the only way they could tell who had been killed and who had survived. Nobody would come to grieve for Lige. He had no family.

Later, in another explosion, I was to witness the full tragedy of this trek up the tracks. That was when the "punching house" went up with six men. It was heartbreaking to watch as woman after woman met her man and clasped him in the ecstasy of knowing that he was still alive. The line thinned until, at last, only six weeping women remained. No husband, brother, son or sweetheart was there to meet them.

Of course, like everyone else, I'd read a lot of stories about how sand hogs risk their lives digging tunnels under rivers, how high steel men face the dangers of their calling and how coal miners face death from "black damp." I knew that these men could take certain precautions, use certain safety devices and that they had, at least, some warning of disaster before it struck. Of these things the "powder" man has none. He is facing an entirely unpredictable element in which danger and sudden death lurk every minute. For him there is no warning, no way of escape, once disaster strikes.

As time went on I learned the psychology of these men with whom I worked. I, like them, became somewhat contemptuous of the stuff we were working with. I developed the same sort of fatalism they must develop if they are to sleep at night. I learned to drink hard and play hard as if each interval of play might be my last chance to enjoy the pleasures of this earth. I learned of the loyalty that develops between men who daily face a common danger. In time, working in the "powder" became as prosaic and commonplace to me as working as a clerk behind a counter would have been.

To the casual eye a dynamite plant is just another sprawling factory. Closer observation proves otherwise. The plant at Ashburn, for instance. Ugly scars mark many of the hillsides, mute and tragic evidence that men have died there. Each building in which the actual process of dynamite making takes place is strategically situated in the shallow ravines between the hills so as to minimize the effect of an explosion in one. As an added precaution, each house is surrounded by a thick barricade of twelve-by-twelve timbers in the form of a crib. This is filled with dirt and rock. All tracks over which vehicles move are of wood to eliminate the danger of sparks generating. The men wear rubber-soled shoes and pocketless coveralls. This is to discourage the temptation to carry matches to the plant. A surprise match search is made at intervals. A man caught with a match, thus endangering the lives of his fellow workers, is forever blackballed from Du Pont plants.

THE process of manufacturing dynamite is comparatively simple. This process, despite the advances of science and the ingenuity of mechanical engineers, has not changed materially for the past thirty years. The first step is the manufacture of nitroglycerin. This is done in a house called the nitrator. Here, suspended over a cistern of water, is a huge lead vat. Into this vat the various ingredients, nitric, sulphuric acids and glycerin, are poured. When the fusing of these elements is chemically satisfactory, the vat gives off a light blue vapor. When the mixture is fusing improperly the blue gradually turns to pink. If this improper fusing continues, the pink becomes a light red—then more red. Just how red these fumes are permitted to become before the mixture explodes is a matter of the operator's knowledge and experience. If he feels that an explosion is imminent he squeezes the trip valve in his hand and "drowns" the charge in the cistern. But "drowning" charges is an expensive business and if a man makes too

much of a habit of it the company replaces him with a man who has either more nerve or less brains. Incidentally, men working in the acids must wear silk clothing as the fumes eat away cotton or wool within a few minutes.

Next comes the actual formation of dynamite. In the "mixing house," corn meal and sawdust are dumped into a round, shallow tank. Into this nitroglycerin is poured, the amount depending on the percentage of dynamite to be made. This ranges from forty per cent to seventy-five. The greater the percentage of nitro, naturally, the stronger the explosive effect. Two types of dynamite are turned out; "dry" and "gelatin." The gelatin, having somewhat the consistency of gritty putty, is used mostly in blasting where a slow explosive force is needed.

These ingredients are mixed by a huge, rubber-tired wheel which rolls slowly around the tank until the mixture is completed.

From the "mixing house" the dynamite is taken to the "punching house" where it is loaded into the shells to become the sticks of dynamite that are in commercial use. The powder is placed in a bin above the "punching machine." It feeds through narrow slots into rows of empty shells set in a long drum. The powder is tamped tight by copper plungers. When one row of shells is filled and crimped the drum rolls and presents another set of empties. Above the apertures through which the powder flows is a long mirror. The operator stands constantly with his hand on a trip valve and his eyes on his mirror. Any foreign object, a small stone, a nail, even a tack or hairpin may cause an explosion. At the slightest suspicion of such an object the trip valve is squeezed and the machine stopped.

These sticks of dynamite are then dipped in hot paraffin to waterproof them and then sent to the packing house, the operation of which has been previously described. The boxed stuff goes to the magazine where it is loaded into freight cars and shipped to all parts of the world.

Simple? Yes, but only when you read it. Every step, from "acid line" to magazine, is dangerous. In every one of these simple operations men have lost their lives. Just recently the newspapers carried the news of an explosion in the Hercules plant near San Francisco in which several men died.

But making dynamite isn't all death, danger and weeping widows and orphans. "Powder" men play as hard as they work. Their humor is coarse, their horseplay rough and their practical jokes not gentle. A novice, for instance, may put on his hat some evening to find his head encased in a band of living fire. Some old-timer will have smeared nitroglycerin around his inner hatband and perspiration does the rest. He is sent wandering fruitlessly around the plant in search of "left-handed powder strainers" or other non-existent articles which the prankster invents on the spur of the moment. Or, perhaps, some noon hour, he becomes a witness to a test of nerve. Two men are each handed a stick of dynamite. A foot-long fuse is attached to each. Between them, as they stand facing each other, a bucket of water is placed. The fuses are lighted and the man who has nerve enough to hold his stick until his fuse is shortest wins. To make it realistic, bets are placed on the contestants. When those fuses get shorter and shorter, the novice begins to sweat. When one man at last drops his stick into the water bucket, the other calmly lights a cigarette with a half-inch-long fuse. By this time the novice is usually on his way to the next county. Of course the sticks are merely dummies.

Another chap, Bud Harmon, and I once played a practical joke which turned into a near tragedy. The boxes in which dynamite is packed are good white pine and make excellent kindling. Most of the men in the plant were married and their wives cooked with wood stoves. As some boxes are always broken in handling, the man who drove the magazine truck would throw off the broken ones in a little ravine which was on our way home. There the men would pick them up and divide the wood.

The more than two hundred "hunkies" who formed the plant's labor gang lived in a huge company house on the plant. Since they never washed or changed clothes before going home, as the rest of us did, they began beating us to the kindling.

More as a joke than anything else, Bud and I determined to teach them a lesson. Going to the plant early one day, we broke up a box and dripped nitroglycerin on the pieces. Putting it in the ravine with the others which had accumulated that day, we went on our way.

Next morning, the night watchman told us what had happened. When the hunkies lit their breakfast fire, the lid of their big stove went through the roof. It's a wonder a number of them were not killed. They came jumping out windows like rabbits with a ferret after them. They never bothered our kindling again.

Those hunkies weren't particular about what they ate. With cheap Sears Roebuck shotguns they'd go hunting every Sunday and anything that flew, walked, ran or swam was meat for their pot. One morning, Big John, the giant Serb whose quaint use of the English language was always good for a laugh, showed up with a stomachache. I asked him if it could have been something he'd eaten. He grinned, said, "Tink so. Maybe too much beeg chick."

The "beeg chick" proved, on investigation, to have been a carrion-eating turkey buzzard he'd shot and stewed!

When they lit their breakfast fire, the lid of the stove went right through the roof—which wasn't surprising considering the nitro that had been dripped on their kindling.

DESPITE the fact that their bodies are saturated with nitroglycerin and one drink will start their hearts pounding like a trip-hammer because of this, "powder" men are heavy drinkers. Perhaps because it's the only real pleasure they get from the tension of always working with Death grinning at their elbows. Ashburn had "local option" but Louisiana, twenty-six miles south on the CB&Q, was wide open. Therefore the Saturday-night trek to Louisiana was a weekly event for all of us.

Fifty or sixty of us would pile on the 4:14 P.M. local passenger each Saturday afternoon. Dutch, Gene and I always did our drinking together. To start a fight with one meant that whoever started it must fight all three and we seldom had trouble unless it was of our own making. Quite often we made it, just for the fun of it. Seldom did one of these Saturday-night sprees end without a free-for-all between the "powder" men and the river fisher-

men. Leader of the "powder" gang was a giant of a man, a "powder boomer," named Butch Slaughter. A good-natured, open-hearted, laughing man until in his cups and then he was a one-man blitzkrieg. Butch laughed as he fought and he fought because he loved it only a little less than he did liquor and women. A "powder boomer" is a roving powder man who roves from one plant to another as fancy moves him. I've seen Butch clean up an entire saloon single-handed.

Another character always with us on these expeditions was wizened little "Guncotton" Eddy. Guncotton was one of the few who never got over the terrible dynamite headache. Drunk, he would buy a pail of dill pickles, sit on the curb, peel the warts off and eat them. That or lemons are the only things that will help a nitro headache. Guncotton's heart-throb was "Old Gert" who had, so she claimed, been the true love of a Seattle lumber baron in her youth and mistress of the finest establishment on the old Barbary Coast. Then a fat, drunken old harridan, she walked to the plant each payday and paraded her questionable charms before the hunkies. When in their cups she and Eddy fought like cats and dogs. She lived in a little shack just out of town. The shack was built into a clay bank and a small porch ran out in front. Once I went with Elmer Douglas, the marshal, to arrest Old Gert for fighting. She threw her three hundred pounds of fat on the floor and defied us. Douglas sent me for a spring wagon. Together we rolled her out of the shack and off the porch, a drop of ten feet, into the wagon and took her to jail.

All Ashburn offered in the way of amusement was fishing in the river, hunting in the hills and the square dances at which corn liquor always flowed plentifully.

I stayed in the powder for three years. During that time I went through six explosions and saw thirty-five of my friends blown to bits. I began to get itchy feet and started to save up a stake. I had a feeling I wanted to see what South America looked like. Dutch had been made foreman of the nitro storehouse and Gene had gone with him. I was foreman of the gelatin packing house. Bud Harmon's wife, tired of the agony of wondering each morning if he'd come home alive that night, had induced him to leave the "powder" and join the labor gang. Still we were all buddies. We'd meet every night and walk home together. We will went on our weekly sprees to Louisiana. Dutch, Gene and I were still known as the "Three Musketeers." I don't think three men have ever been closer than we were.

Hunters had not been allowed on the vast area of the plant for years and the woods abounded with fox squirrels. To while away my lunch hours, I had built a cage just inside our barricade and, each noon, I spent my time catching young squirrels. I did't know it then, but this hobby was to save my life.

It was early in September. I had my stake saved up and was determined that the next payday I would be off to South America. I had a girl in town of whom I was fond. She loved animals of all kinds and as a farewell present I promised her a pair of young fox squirrels. That morning I took my empty shoebox to the plant in order to bring them home.

That evening, when the quitting whistle blew, I picked up my lunch bucket, turned off the power on the nailer and started down the hill to the nitro storehouse, a half mile away. I was perhaps a third of the way down, when I remembered the squirrels. Knowing that the boys would wait for me, I turned to go back. I had taken but a few steps when it seemed the whole world blew up. The concussion knocked me flat. I lay a few moments to regain my senses and when I looked up it was to see a vast column of smoke rising from where the nitro storehouse had been. I knew that Gene, Dutch, Bud and I would never again walk down the track homeward or fight our battles side by side. I did not even go down to see just what had happened. I turned, caught my squirrels and said good-by to the powder. As I walked slowly, I realized that never, in the years to come, would I find three better pals than the three I had just lost. I remember how often, in jest, we had talked of how it felt to be blown up. Did it come too fast for any flash of realization or was there that brief instant, before disintegration, when the knowledge of death came to one? Gene, Dutch and Bud, wherever they are, know. I hope I'll never find out.

Later, in New Orleans, I got a letter from the girl to whom I had given the squirrels. Bud had been walking, as I had, to join the others. The blast had smashed him up against a tree and left nothing but a limp chunk of mangled flesh and bone. Some boys, hunting, had found all that was ever found of Gene and Dutch. That had been one of Dutch's charred fingers with the gold ring his mother had given him on his twenty-first birthday, melted around the bone.

No, making dynamite isn't fun. Not by one hell of a lot!

ILLUSTRATED BY
RAY BETHERS
RAY BETHERS

"Shift fire to the cruiser!" Foley bawled, but the order was unnecessary. At least two torpedoes tore into her, rolling her far over to starboard and burying her under tons of water.

TURN AWAY

By DURAND KIEFER

COMMANDER MICHAEL C. FOLEY, U. S. Navy, is one of your perfectionists who are never satisfied. Certainly not by a victory against formidable odds, nor by the Navy Cross in recognition of it, nor even by the adulation of his own officers and men. Foley feels that if he hadn't had such a passion for his guns he would have done a lot better. If, for instance, he had ordered a turn away instead of commence firing . . .

A WAN last quarter moon hung almost dead ahead of Foley's three destroyers as they raced westward through the Schouten Islands at twenty knots. His flagship, the USS *Sedgwick*, led, with the *Chickering* and the *O'Byrnne* astern in column open order. It was 2308 by the luminous clock in the *Sedgwick's* darkened pilot house.

In a corner of her bridge, Foley stood a little apart, his dark figure in jacket and helmet distinguishable from the others only by its unusual height and distinct stoop. His orders were to rendezvous with Commander Barton's three destroyers at midnight at a point ten miles west of Neomfoor Island. Thereafter he and Barton were to intercept six Japanese destroyers heading down from the north to land reinforcements on Neomfoor. Since Barton was coming up from a sweep to the south into Geelvink Bay, there was danger that the Japs would arrive first and get between them, threatening two-to-one odds against the one that arrived first. If the rendezvous were accomplished, Foley, being junior, would have to conform to Barton's battle plan without knowing in advance what it was.

It was not, Foley was thinking, what you might call the best conditions for his first night action as a division commander. But at least there were no cruisers to screen tonight. Foley was grateful for that, remembering Kula Gulf.

"This time, by God, we'll find out who's got the best destroyers!" he thought, and immediately grinned to himself. For it was not a question of that at all. He was perfectly confident that these twenty-one-hundred-tonners of his were the best in the world. No, as always, it was a case of who had the best men.

Foley's grin broadened. His pride in his men was boundless. His captains knew their business. True, they were even younger than he, but they were old destroyer hands and veterans of The Slot, where destroyer officers either learned fast or died young. Foley had commanded the division only three months, but Hayward of the *O'Byrnne* he knew from the

old days in Manila, Lentz of the *Chickering* he could remember as a rosy-faced, good-natured plebe at the Academy, and Dave Farrel, his flag captain, had been his exec at Kula Gulf.

Foley quit smiling abruptly. It had struck him again that the lives of these men, as well as some nine hundred others and three splendid ships, rested on his own shoulders in this business. It was not a comforting thought. It made him feel suddenly old and worn out, although he was not yet forty.

He turned nervously to face the bridge, half expecting to find the eyes of his men questioning him. When he spoke, it was to his flag captain.

"How far is it now to the rendezvous, Farrel?"

Farrel's navigator spoke up from his chart table, his young face ruddy in the red glow of the chart lamp. "It was twenty-four miles at twenty-three hundred, Commander. In just three minutes more we will have the west tangent of Neomfoor ten miles abeam. The course from there to the rendezvous is two-four-five."

"Fine," Foley said. "We'll make it about on time." He turned to Carson, the signal officer, and said, "Execute to follow: *Column left to course two-four-five.* Execute it on the navigator's signal."

Three minutes later, the *Sedgwick* heeled around to the new course, the ships astern following in her wake. The last ship had not yet fully rolled out of the turn when the loudspeaker in the flagship's pilot house broke its silence of almost half an hour. The voice of Farrel's exec rose from the ship's tactical plotting center with none of its usual coolness.

"Bridge from Center!" it bawled. "Bridge from Center. Contact! Surface craft bearing three-oh-one, twenty-three thousand yards. Repeating: Surface craft. . ."

Foley and Farrel exchanged glances. The division commander nodded. On that bearing it could only be the Japs, an hour earlier than expected. Still no word from Barton. The worst had happened then, with the odds at two-to-one.

Foley turned to the signal officer. "Report the contact to the *Chickering* and *O'Byrnne* and request verification."

As he stepped out to his corner of the bridge where he could be alone, Foley's shoulders seemed less round than usual, and his bent head had come up stiff on the long neck so that his figure towered taller than ever.

"Twenty-three thousand yards is eleven-and-a-half miles," he was thinking. "Visibility down-moon tonight is close to ten miles. I've got a couple of minutes' advantage due to surprise, and at night, surprise is half the battle. My chances of joining up with Barton now are negligible. I don't know his plans, anyway. If I'm going to exploit my advantage—"

"*Chickering* and *O'Byrnne* confirm the contact, Commander!"

Foley's decision was already made, based on his relief at not having to anticipate Barton's will, and his eagerness to demonstrate what destroyers could do when they were unencumbered. The possibility of retiring until Barton came up never entered his head. Nor did any of his former solicitude for his men and ships. He simply saw himself in a battle of wits with a certain slippery individual whom he called Mr. Moto.

"Very well," Foley acknowledged. "Inform the division that we are closing to engage. Encode a contact to report to Commander Barton and include the same information." Foley spoke in his normal bridge voice, which seldom fell below a husky shout.

"Farrel!"

"Yes, Commander."

"Signal the division to follow me. Then change course to the bearing of the enemy and execute a speed signal for thirty knots."

"Aye, aye, sir."

IT WAS two minutes and twenty seconds after contact. The division had been at battle stations since sunset. Above the crescendo howl of the ship's forced-draft blowers, Foley heard the urgent voice of a quartermaster at his shoulder.

"Do you see them, Commander?" The man was pointing almost dead ahead as the ship steadied on the new course.

Foley steadied his binoculars against the vibration and the wind.

"Ah, yes. Thank you."

A pair of innocent-looking silhouettes slid silently across the path of the moon. At ten miles, only their distinctive upper works were visible above the horizon. A third was barely distinguishable in the darkness on the other side of the moon's path. Destroyers in column, their silhouettes indicating a course change as Foley watched. "They're turning southwest, across my bows," he thought. "That means Mr. Moto has seen me, but not well. It will be a while before he knows how much he outnumbers me if I keep my column headed for him. I've got him outguessed so far. Only a dope would change course directly up-moon like that."

Foley was feeling top-dog when he saw the light cruiser. With a shock that spread a chill across his shoulders, he watched the chunky bridge and the three unmatched stacks of a Kendari march quietly into the moonlight, followed by two more destroyers. That made six, all right. But that damn cruiser!

Foley regarded the cruiser as a personal affront. His resentment centered on the pilot who had originally reported the Jap force. Six destroyers, eh? It was a wonder that a couple

of them hadn't turned out to be battleships!

Foley failed to recognize that even if there had been battleships it wouldn't have altered the battle plan which was taking shape in his mind. The range was down to nine miles now, and closing steadily as he kept coming left with frequent course changes to keep heading Mr. Moto off, while that character sped south and west at thirty knots in a wide end-run that was altogether impracticable if he had only been able to see it.

Foley could see it clearly. Since he had the inside track, he would sooner or later wind up on the bow of the Jap column in torpedo position, while Mr. Moto would be able to respond with nothing but his forward guns. Foley gave Mr. Moto credit for having more sense than to get into such a spot, so it was simply a question of what the Jap would do before affairs reached that stage.

He had a number of alternatives, but that which appealed most to Foley was the one in which the Jap would turn sharply toward him and rapidly close to decisive ranges for a torpedo and gun duel as the two columns swept past each other on opposite courses. The result would be a brief but fearful slugging match. As he was outweighed in both torpedo and gun broadsides, Foley's cool preference for such an event appeared to be nothing short of suicidal. But he could see his way through it clearly.

His plan was simplicity itself. He would get his torpedoes off first and immediately turn his ships away, thus clearing quickly out of torpedo range before Mr. Moto could get off a fish. The same maneuver would open the gun range to about five miles from where, on parallel courses, Foley could pound the Jap at will with his superior fire-control, with little risk of being hit in return, except by the cruiser.

It was a beautiful plan and Foley recognized its worth.

"Signal the division to prepare to engage to port," he ordered. "All ships to fire a full torpedo broadside on signal. That will be shortly after we make a sharp column turn to the right. Pass the word, Farrel."

Foley watched the enemy column carefully. The range was down to seven miles. The Jap must be sure of his numerical superiority by now. Foley prayed audibly that the Jap would take the bait. But he would have to make up his mind soon. Foley felt his palms sweating in spite of the chillness of the wind. If the slippery so-and-so got away. . .

"Here they come!" The youngster on port lookout had forgotten all his training.

Foley laughed aloud. The leading Jap was coming around sharp toward him, followed by the rest of the column. Foley called for column right fifty degrees toward the enemy. It was the sharp right turn that he had anticipated to place the opposing column on his port bow. The instant Foley heard the signal executed he ordered another to stand by to fire torpedoes, each ship to report when ready.

The margin between triumph and disaster was now a matter of seconds. The range was already down to six miles, and with the two columns racing almost directly toward each other at thirty knots, it was closing at a rate of nearly a nautical mile each minute. Within three minutes, if they were to fire first, Foley's torpedo officers must have their problems solved and be ready to fire. Within six minutes the two columns would pass each other abeam at about two miles, a point-blank range where even at night nothing can survive in the face of withering fire from five- and six-inch guns that can hardly miss. Before that, Foley intended to turn away and pull out.

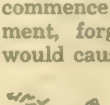
Hayward and Lentz reported ready within a minute. Target distribution, point of aim, spread angles, depth setting, all these were provided for in the torpedo doctrine.

There was nothing for Foley to do now but watch and wait. The over-calm voice of the range-plotter's voice ticked off the seconds like a stop watch: "Range one oh, five double oh—Range one oh, triple oh—Range nine five double oh. . . "

Foley chewed the inside of his lip and waited, shifting his weight from foot to foot and squaring his shoulders. He hated waiting, any kind of waiting, but especially this. He had committed himself to it unhesitatingly because he knew, as a priest knows the catechism, that the torpedo is the primary weapon of the destroyer.

But from point of experience and training, his true love was the guns, and especially these five-inch thirty-eights that would hit fifteen times a minute at five miles and more in the darkest night. While he waited, he watched their thin barrels move in unison to counter the slight roll of the ship. Their uncanny instruments were keeping them laid continuously to the hitting range. It was a struggle to hold them in leash as the loudspeaker called out ranges at which they could sweep the enemy's decks like so many flame-throwers.

For a moment Foley felt that it was sheer insanity to withhold his fire an instant longer. A passion close to panic swept over him to commence firing. He distrusted his earlier judgment, forgetting the disruption that gunfire would cause among his torpedo batteries.



"TWO degrees to the torpedo bearing, Commander!" the torpedo officer called.

Foley let out his breath in a sigh of relief. "Very well," he snapped. "Fire on the bearing. Carson, execute the signal to fire torpedoes."

The torpedo officer yelled, "Fire one!" much louder than necessary. The first cough and swish came from the tubes. The long steel cylinders began to leap clear, their greased flanks gleaming briefly in moonlight before they disappeared in eight successive geysers of spray. Within ninety seconds, twenty-four of them raced from the three ships at forty miles an hour toward a rendezvous with havoc three miles away. It would be almost four minutes before they got there.

Foley counted the swift splashes from the tubes, confident that he had beaten Mr. Moto to the first punch. In a moment he could turn away and clear out. But even as he counted, Foley's eyes, his mind, and his heart were again on his guns. He was smiling a little at the thought of what they could do to Mr. Moto as the range-plotter called ranges under four miles. "Right now I could nail him before he even gets off a torpedo. If I turn away I'll mask my guns for almost five minutes. I can't return the fire if Moto suddenly opens up on me before I finish the maneuver. He'll start pounding me to pieces the minute I turn. . . "

So Foley reasoned, or thought he did. Actually, he knew from experience that the Jap's night gunnery could be discounted on such a maneuver. But in his impatience he forgot that. That and other things. With a nervous gesture he turned to the pilot house.

"Farrel!" he called. "Commence firing!"

His flag captain was not surprised. Within five seconds all five guns of the flagship let go simultaneously, poisoning the night with flame and acrid smoke. Before they spoke again the two ships astern belched a full salvo together. From then on it was almost impossible to see, to talk, to think, and even to breathe. The guns took over the world and filled it with thunder and lightning. The ship jarred and rattled as if shaken in the fist of an angry God.

With the exciting taste of blood in his mouth that the concussion always gave him, Foley fought the drunken lurch and shudder of the deck in an effort to keep his binoculars on the enemy line. Through brief breaks in the gun smoke he could see the splashes churning the sea white around the first three ships. Bright orange flashes rippled up and down their silhouettes like strings of firecrackers. He couldn't be sure which were hits and which the flashes from the Jap's guns.

Foley realized anxiously that it must be time for his torpedoes to strike if they were going to. The next half minute passed like an hour. The enemy held his orderly line, apparently taking terrific punishment without wavering. Foley's morale was ebbing when the third target suddenly burst into flame from stem to stern and fell rapidly back into the column. As she swung out of line, stricken by the torpedo hit, she exploded like a giant grenade and with a mushrooming column of smoke and fiery fragments still towering over her, disappeared into an inferno of blazing oil that lit up the sea for miles.

The cruiser, next in line, steamed past the flames, firing all her guns in slow, deliberate salvos. Foley was conscious of the six-inch shells falling in a tight welter of splashes not fifty yards ahead of his bow, drenching him with their spray. "Beautiful fall-of-shot pattern," he thought distractedly. "Dead on in range. If they ever get on in deflection. . . "

"Shift fire to the cruiser!" he bawled into the pilot house.

The order was unnecessary. Farrel had ordered the shift as soon as his first target blew up. A salvo already in the air now straddled the cruiser with two hits forward. Simultaneously, at least two torpedoes tore into her, rolling her far over to starboard and burying her under tons of falling water. She emerged blazing amidships and heeling rapidly to port where the fish had caught her, her guns firing spasmodically and wild. Farrel's next salvo caught her with two more hits at this instant, starting another fire aft. She was swinging away and slowing down.

The cruiser was in danger of colliding with the destroyer next astern of her when that vessel took a couple of torpedoes that exploded her forward magazines. With her bow gone to her bridge and her engines still driving her ahead at thirty knots she literally submerged like a submarine. In seconds she had disappeared and the crippled cruiser, still swinging out of control, passed through the water where she had been.

The enemy's two leading destroyers were now beginning to show the effects of their punishment. Although they had evidently escaped the torpedo spread, fires and explosions were breaking out all over them. With the range down to little more than two miles, shells from all fifteen of Foley's guns swept their decks in a continuous torrent of fire, leveling bridge, masts, stacks, and guns like machine-gun fire chopping down men lined against a wall. Under this hail of steel their return fire was negligible. First one and then the other swung slowly away behind the smoke of their own burning and drifted hopelessly to a dead stop in the water. The remaining Jap bringing up the rear had turned sharply away when the cruiser was hit and had disappeared behind the smoke.

Foley watched the swift disintegration of the enemy with frank wonder. It had been so incredibly much easier than he had expected. His watch told him it had taken no more than six minutes from the time he first fired his torpedoes. He would have been told if his own ships had been hit.

This was victory. More, it was a clear triumph against heavy odds. Certainly, he thought, it vindicated his hasty decision to open fire instead of turning away. Not even he had

fully appreciated what his guns could do. The headiness of his elation made him a little drunk. He wanted to shout congratulations to everyone and run around pounding Farrel and Carson and the others on the back.

His voice betrayed none of this as he ordered, "Check fire!" His binoculars were trained on the remaining destroyer which had suddenly burst from the smoke, headed back for home with a bone in her teeth and her tail between her legs. Foley rapidly calculated the chances of overtaking her and decided they were good. Barton, who by now should already have sighted the blazing hulks to the south, could take care of what was left of them. Foley turned to the pilot house to issue orders to resume firing and increase speed to full power. He had decided to haul over to a parallel course and leisurely polish off the lone survivor at a good long range. It would be fine practice for the gunnery departments, and only take a few minutes. . .

"TORPEDO on the port bow!"

The cry came from the lookout. Foley turned from the pilot house and cleared the ten feet to the windbreak in one leap. Farrel was right behind him, bawling, "Full left rudder!" over his shoulder to the helmsman. The ship started to swing.

Foley saw them instantly. Not one, or two, or three, but a whole spread of them. Eight, twelve, twenty—there might be thirty or more wakes streaking toward his column. It was not the first torpedo spread Foley had seen, but that did not lessen the trapped feeling in the pit of his stomach.

Where did they come from? Foley wanted to turn and scream it at Farrel, at everyone. Where did they *come* from? Now, when he'd already won?

Foley knew. A calm, cold voice he'd heard before reminded him, "Of course. Of course, Mr. Moto got his torpedoes off. He always does. Always. He was just a couple of minutes late this time. Remember? Two minutes late plus a minute to get them off, plus four minutes run, is seven minutes. It is now seven minutes since you fired yours. You were going to turn away five minutes ago to avoid this. Remember? *Why didn't you?*"

The ship was swinging rapidly toward the wakes to comb them in the standard maneuver. The nearest were only a couple of hundred yards away and coming fast. But the ship, at thirty knots, was light on her feet. One would pass well ahead. She might just skin between the next two.

Foley felt a sickening thrust on the balls of his feet as the whole forward half of the ship seemed to leap upward like an express elevator. It dropped again with a jerk that threw him violently to the deck. There he was buried under a deluge of water that fell on the bridge as if dumped from an up-ended bucket. It floated him like driftwood until it ran off in a waterfall leaving him stranded and unconscious.

As Foley lay there, the whole bow of the ship broke off just forward of him and swung ponderously to one side until it wrenched clear and scraped aft along the starboard side. With the engines still driving ahead at thirty knots, the ship was in danger of sinking instantly if the thin bulkhead beneath the bridge should collapse under the pressure.

Captain Lentz, in the ship astern, had seen the torpedo wakes an instant sooner than those on the flagship and had swung the *Chickering* hard left to dodge them. One had passed down

As Colorful as an old Print

THAT'S what readers say of our True Tales, featuring stories of old-time railroading, told by the men who put 'em over the high iron a generation ago. You'll like **Railroad Magazine's** balance of new and historical material. Subscribe now. $2.50 by the year.

RAILROAD MAGAZINE
205 E. 42nd St., New York City 17

each side as he turned, but in order to clear his stern from the torpedo to starboard, he had had to reverse his rudder and come hard right. Before he could recover from this maneuver, he saw the tremendous explosion on the flagship and found her swinging out of control directly across his bows. Lentz again reversed his rudder, but it was too late. He ordered his engines from full speed ahead to full speed astern, but the *Chickering* was still making fifteen knots when she hit the *Sedgwick* abreast the after engine-room, plowing into her about ten feet before the bow was stopped by her port propeller shaft.

Foley had just gotten to his feet, drenched and dazed, when the collision knocked him down again. It also stopped the headlong rush of the flagship that was driving her to her death. Her engine-room crew, in momentary danger of being parboiled alive by escaping steam, quickly secured the throttles and fled the engine-room.

Foley struggled to his feet again. As the fog began to roll back in his brain he saw the horrifying waste of empty sea where the ship's bow should have been and realized dully that the forward magazines must have blown up. Turning aft, he saw the crumpled bow of the *Chickering* backing out of the chasm in his flagship's side. It was evident that Lentz's ship was not seriously damaged and equally evident that the flagship's fighting days were over.

The only relief to the distress that flooded over him was the sight of the undamaged *O'Byrnne*, pursuing the sole Jap survivor at full speed with all her guns blazing. Foley noted, too, the flashes of fresh gunfire from over the horizon to the south that heralded the arrival of Barton's division. But he found no consolation in this as he stood with bent head while Farrel informed him of the ship's damage and casualties. Forty-seven of her men were dead or missing and another fourteen were wounded. Salvage of the ship was hopeless.

Foley was silent for several minutes, his chin on his chest and his eyes closed. "Very well," he said at last. "You might as well pass the word to abandon ship. Signal the *Chickering* to stand by to take aboard survivors."

Foley was the last to leave. That was Farrel's privilege, but Foley took heavily the responsibility for the death of the ship and her men. If he could have felt that it was unavoidable, he might have been able to dismiss it with that comfortable phrase, "Fortune of war." But that cold, calm voice within him kept reminding him. It was not unavoidable. He had known how to avoid it. He had intended to avoid it. He had intended to turn away. . .

Lentz welcomed him aboard the *Chickering* with a warm greeting and a message from Barton. Silently, Foley took the dispatch form and read, *Congratulations on a splendid victory. Will cover your withdrawal after mopping up. Have ordered* O'Byrnne *to abandon chase and join me.*

Foley handed back the dispatch with a frown. Without a word, he started for the bridge. At the foot of the ladder he turned and walked slowly to the rail. His stoop had never been so noticeable.

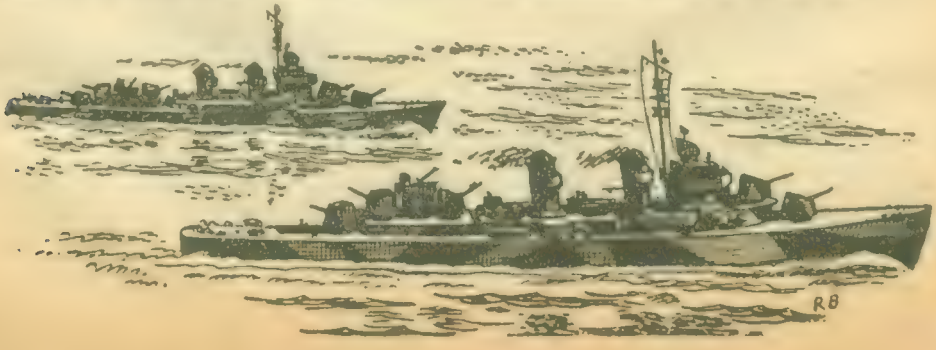
The *Sedgwick* had rolled ponderously on her side like a weary hippopotamus without a head, showing the sleek fatness of her underbelly. With much snorting and blowing as her last breath escaped her, she buried first her tall bridge structure, then her fat stacks, in the frothing sea, at last flinging her naked stern indecently into the air until her stilled propellers came clear and dripping. She seemed to squirm a little as she slid more and more hurriedly into her grave, with a last violent protest as the entrapped air blew off a hatch-cover on her fantail with a bang like a burst paper bag. Then she was gone.

The three officers stood silently. Foley was the first to speak. He cleared his throat and spoke rapidly, spitting out the words.

"I'm sorry, Dave. I could have saved her. It was so damned unnecessary. If I'd turned away. . . "

Embarrassed, Farrel laughed awkwardly. "You're a card, Mike," he interrupted. "You trade the Jap one ship for five, and you're sorry. Good Lord, what do you want? An egg in your beer?"

Foley laughed, but it was forced. He was not satisfied. He never would be.



CHARGE OF MAYHEM

By

FRANKLIN GREGORY

THE point I want to make is that it isn't always good policy to be an honest newspaper reporter. Collie Ives found that out, and he hasn't been able to get a job since.

That's Collie, sleeping over there at the corner table. He spends most of his time here in the club now. He's pretty much on his uppers, you know.

It started right here, of course, just as a lot of strange things have. I don't know why they do, unless it's the intangible quality of this place that you might call utter timelessness. It might not be so readily apparent to a casual guest like yourself. But the regular members feel that when they come in here, it's something like entering a vacuum. No deadlines, no dyspeptic city editors, no clocks, radios, calendars, telephones. You can pass out on Friday and wake up on Saturday and the same steward will still be serving drinks to the same men, and the same poker players will still be playing seven-card stud in the card room.

Amby scampered up the rope like a monkey and then he disappeared before our very eyes.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH FARREN

And, of course, it's a pretty famous club, too. We've entertained a good many distinguished persons — presidential candidates, royalty, actors, writers, musicians. But Rai Lala Baij Saraswati was different from all of them. I knew he was different the moment I laid eyes on him.

It was getting on toward midnight and the club was deserted. The afternoon crowd had already left and the fellows who work on the A.M.'s hadn't turned up yet. I was sitting

alone over at that middle table and Joe, the steward, was reading a paper when Collie and this fellow came in.

He was tall and lean and sported a dapper little waxed mustache. He wore an elegant white turban which showed off to advantage his liquid black eyes and dark complexion. He would have been handsome except for a pair of outsize ears. Following Collie to my table, he moved with the grace of a cat.

"Meet Mr. Saraswati," Collie said. I got up and was about to extend my hand when Collie said, "He's a god, Norm. Does tricks."

"Not tricks," corrected Mr. Saraswati with an urbane smile. "Miracles."

I'd had a couple of drinks and for the moment I may have been confused. I looked at Collie and then I looked at Mr. Saraswati and then I looked back at Collie. Collie didn't bat an eye.

I've wondered since how you address a god. But all I could think to say then was, "Won't you have a drink?"

"We will be glad," replied Collie, "of a sacramental offering."

I called Joe over and asked them what they'd have.

"Soma," said Mr. Saraswati. I looked at him. I thought there was a twinkle in his eyes.

"Soma?" I said vaguely.

"You got some soma, Joe?" Collie asked.

"Som'a what?" asked Joe.

"I don't like to be rude," I said, "but what is soma?"

Mr. Saraswati was indulgent.

"Soma," he explained in perfect English, "is the libation of the gods. It moves us to grant the petitions of our worshipers. It gives us strength. Indra drank it when he defeated the dragon Vritra."

I asked where it came from and he said from the sacred soma plant.

"I'm sorry," I said, "I guess Joe doesn't have any. Will you settle for Scotch?"

After Joe brought our drinks, Collie said, "Mr. Saraswati comes from India.

"Western India," Mr. Saraswati amended. "From Chinchvad, to be specific, a little town about ten miles from Poona."

"Where he's persona non grata at present," added Collie. "It's because he's a god. The Brahmans got it in for him."

I said that was too bad. I said I was a little rusty on my Vedas, but I didn't recall having heard of a god named Saraswati. Mr. Saraswati laughed gently.

"You haven't," he said. "I am an incarnation of Ganesa."

"Sometimes known as Gunput or Ganapati," Collie said. And I couldn't help looking at the oversize ears of Mr. Saraswati, because Ganapati is the elephant-headed god of wisdom. And, of course, looking at it one way, it wasn't as if anything irregular had occurred. Everybody knows that over in Asia, incarnate human gods are a dime a dozen. And up in China, the Imperial Colonial Office even used to license them.

SOME of the fellows from the morning papers drifted in and sat down at our table. There was another round of drinks, and Mr. Saraswati loosened up and started telling about himself. It seems that about three hundred years ago there was a Brahman at Chinchvad called Mooraba Gosseyn. He sought salvation by abstinence and prayer and did such a good job that Ganapati appeared before him and told him that as a reward his holy spirit should abide with Mooraba. Not only that, but the thing was put on a permanent basis, the incarnation being transmitted from father to son.

The successive Ganapatis performed all sorts of miracles. But about 1810 the last of the direct line died out. Mr. Saraswati was candid enough about it. He told us, "You couldn't really blame the Brahmans, gentlemen. After all, sacred truth had to be served. And besides, there was quite a bit of church property involved. They found a successor easily enough—a second cousin once removed, I believe."

I said, "Then you're the descendant of the second cousin once removed?"

"Oh, not at all," he replied blandly. "It is my contention that the holy spirit resides in me because I am the descendant of the younger brother of the last of the direct line. I contend that the Brahmans perpetrated a fraud upon the people."

Somebody said, "Oh, so that's how it was?"

And Mr. Saraswati answered, "Yes. But the present Brahmans made it somewhat uncomfortable for me when I put forth my claims, and I thought it advisable to go away."

Somebody said it was a lousy trick to play on a god. And somebody whose mind ran in cruder channels—Max Sax, I think, of the *Record*—suggested that a god ought to be powerful enough to have his own way.

But Mr. Saraswati said that Hindu gods were different. His face actually lit up with good humor when he added, "And, of course, the present impersonator of Ganesa can't even do the Hindu Rope Trick properly."

"Miracle," corrected Collie Ives.

Mr. Saraswati made a slight bow.

"Can you?" asked Kenneth Watson, who had sat down a few minutes earlier. "I say, is it very difficult?"

"I would describe it, Mr. Watson, as elementary," Mr. Saraswati replied.

"Oh!" I said. "Hasn't the British Magic Circle offered twenty-five thousand dollars to anybody who can do it? The one where you toss a

rope into the air and a boy climbs up and slides down again?"

Mr. Saraswati smiled tolerantly.

"Except that that is not quite all the story," he said. "After the boy climbs up, the performer, armed with a sharp sword, follows. Both disappear in the clouds. Then bloody segments of the boy's body drop to the ground. The magician climbs down the rope, wipes off his sword, puts the boy back together again and sends him scampering home."

Max Sax laughed. But Collie Ives said enthusiastically, "Let's try it!"

I thought that a shadow crossed Mr. Saraswati's face; something, at least, that did not reflect Collie's enthusiasm.

But he said amiably, "Of course, there's the matter of the magic formula." He borrowed a piece of copy paper from one of the reporters and a pencil from another. He drew a square and divided it into nine small squares. "Now I wonder," he said thoughtfully, "if I can remember it."

In the upper left-hand square he drew the figure 4; in the upper center, the figure 9; in the upper right, 2. When he'd finished, he had a diagram that looked like this:

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

I recognized it at once, for lately I'd been reading Hogben. You'll notice the figures add up to fifteen any way you start. It's the earliest magic square of history, the Lo Shu, and can be found in the Chinese Book of the Permutations. I was pretty skeptical when I asked, "A Chinese formula, Mr. Saraswati, for a Hindu—er—miracle?"

He looked at me with surprise.

"But of course. Have you forgotten that the Rope Miracle originated in China?"

"Then you'll do it for us?" Collie asked eagerly.

I know now why another faint shadow crossed the Hindu's face. I wonder I didn't think of it then. Mr. Saraswati glanced at his watch and remarked judiciously, "Well, of course, it's after three A.M. And we haven't a rope. Rather a late hour to raise a ship's chandler, wouldn't you say?"

Ken Watson, the club secretary, said, "Oh, there's no worry on that account. We've had the painters in the building the last few days and their scaffold and stuff's still around. Would twenty or thirty feet of the one-inch do?"

"Quite." Mr. Saraswati nodded agreeably. "There's still the problem of the boy."

"That's no problem," said Max Sax promptly. "There'll be scads of newsboys going for their papers any time now."

I thought Mr. Saraswati sighed. Of course, most of the fellows were out-and-out skeptics. But Collie wasn't, and I wasn't sure, and I rather gathered that Watson might be on the fence.

Still, it gave me quite a jolt when Mr. Saraswati objected.

"No," he said. "The thing is definitely impossible. I have no sword."

Max Sax winked at Collie. Collie looked at Watson, and Watson looked blankly at me. I looked at Mr. Saraswati. I'm still not sure just exactly what I saw in those liquid black eyes. Certainly, it wasn't fear. Nor lack of confidence, either. It was, I think, something of condescension.

I hadn't noticed that Joe, the steward, had been hanging around the table since the last service of drinks. He disappeared now in the direction of the club's kitchen and in a moment or two was back.

"I wonder, gentlemen," he inquired gravely, "if something like this wouldn't do?"

And he placed before us a long-bladed butcher knife.

Mr. Saraswati looked at it. He picked it up and ran his thumb along the blade.

"I don't know why not," he said. "It really has a very sharp edge."

I thought the look he gave all of us was pitying.

THERE'LL BE NONE FINER
Motorola
A-M
F-M
Radio
HOME RADIO · AUTO RADIO · AUTOMATIC PHONOGRAPHS · TELEVISION · GALVIN MFG. CORPORATION · CHICAGO

IT WAS getting on toward 4 o'clock when we reached Broad and Walnut Streets. We'd had another round of drinks and then, too, it took a little time to untie the rope from the painters' scaffold. And of course we'd had to hunt up a boy.

That boy business was a problem. All the newsies just laughed. Thought we were drunk, I guess. And one said he couldn't climb. But finally Watson made a tour of the side streets and came back with a little colored kid named Amby he'd found curled up asleep on a doorstep on Camac Street. The kid had a shoeshine box slung around his shoulder and said he lived down on South Street but hadn't gone home the night before because his ma was laying for him. We gave him two dollars and told him we'd give him another deuce after he shinnied up the rope. He took off his shoes and stood around and grinned.

I don't know why we chose Broad and Walnut, which is one of the busiest corners in town by day. But at that hour there's no traffic to speak of. Watson had suggested Rittenhouse Square, but Max Sax said the rope might get tangled up in the trees. I got the impression that he sniggered.

Mr. Saraswati gave the boy his instructions, and then we all went out into the middle of Broad Street. We were a little south of the traffic lights, right between the front doors of the Ritz-Carlton on the east side of the street and the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel on the west.

Hal Morton had joined us just before we left the club. Maybe you know him. He and Collie didn't work on morning papers like the rest of us. Collie had the early central police beat for the *Evening World* and Hal had it for the *Bulletin*. They both went on duty at 7 in the morning and they usually worked together.

Well, when we got out into the street, Mr. Saraswati chalked off that Chinese magic square, about six feet each way. He was just finishing when Mike Foley, the cop on the beat, came along. He recognized some of us and after watching for a minute, or so, he asked, "Whatcha doin'?"

"Playing hopscotch," Collie said.

"That ain't the way I used to play it," Foley said.

"We got a new way," said Collie.

The cop appeared doubtful.

"You oughtn't to mark up public property like that, Collie," he said. But he didn't seem to want to do anything about it. And then Mr. Saraswati picked up the rope. He coiled it, almost like the way a cowboy does a lasso. Then he stepped into the magic square, and nodded for the kid to step to his side.

I was a little worried about Foley. He's a pretty good cop as cops go. But you never can tell how they'll take a little fun, and I couldn't help wondering what he'd do once Mr. Saraswati flashed that knife.

Mr. Saraswati stood in the middle of the square for a moment. He was straight as a reed, but he wasn't standing at attention. He was sort of at ease, the way a person looks when he's praying. Only his eyes were open. He was very quiet, and he seemed to be thinking; as if he were trying to remember something. And then again I had the impression that there was something of uncertainty in his look.

Day was beginning to break, and just then the light of dawn touched the higher windows of the Bellevue-Stratford and a red reflection slanted down from the windows onto the street. It was as if a spotlight had been turned on us. It simply transfigured the Hindu's face.

Foley asked Collie in a hoarse whisper, "What's he aimin' to do?"

"Rope a steer," I heard Collie whisper back.

And then it happened—so fast it left me breathless! With a deft flick of his wrist, Mr. Saraswati sent the rope spinning aloft. It sailed up as if self-propelled, unwinding as it climbed. Saraswati, head thrown back, watched its ascent.

It was only a twenty-foot length at most. And yet as it streaked upwards, its length seemed to grow. I don't mean it stretched. There was no elasticity about it. It simply lengthened. It was uncanny.

Till then, as it uncoiled, Mr. Saraswati's hand was barely touching the rope. But now, as the lower end played out, he tapped it gently. The rope quivered as if it were a live thing, then straightened and grew rigid.

Patrolman Foley's mouth opened and stayed open. Max Sax gasped. The rest of us simply stared up at that rope in amazement, for not only was it hanging suspended against all laws of gravity but, I tell you, you couldn't see the end of it. Its end had disappeared—not in the clouds, for it was a cloudless dawn. It was as if it stretched into and beyond some mysterious and distant horizon of the air.

The only one of us not frozen to the pavement was Amby, the colored kid. There's something about kids that permits them to take the world's wonders as a matter of course. They haven't yet grown up to the adult necessity of imposing fixed and immutable laws upon the surrounding phenomena. So when Mr. Saraswati motioned to him, raising his hand palm-up in a signal of ascent, the kid didn't think twice. He gripped the rope and began to scamper up hand over hand like a monkey.

His speed was astonishing. He'd hardly started, it seemed, before he'd reached a point level with the upper floors of the Bellevue-

Stratford. And then—he disappeared! He disappeared before our very eyes.

WELL, it was Mr. Saraswati's turn then. He took that long butcher knife from under his coat, gripped it in his teeth and took a firm grasp on the rope. And, of course, when that knife came out, Foley came out of his trance.

"Hey, you!" he yelled. "You can't do that on my beat!"

He stepped into the magic square. But already Mr. Saraswati was above our heads.

"He's doin' it, ain't he?" Collie said.

Foley grabbed at the rope and tried to shake it. It didn't budge.

For an instant, Mr. Saraswati paused and glanced down. I can't begin to describe the look he gave Foley. It wasn't hauteur at all, yet it was superior, certainly. It was amused, too, and it was indulgent. Maybe it was something like the look a man gives a good dog. Then he resumed climbing.

A milk wagon rolled out of Walnut Street and the driver got out with a metal basket of bottles on his arm and started footing it across to a restaurant. He gaped at us and he gaped at the rope.

Mr. Saraswati climbed more slowly than the kid. But it was fast enough and in a minute he'd also reached the level of the hotel's upper floors and then—zingo—he vanished, too. The milkman dropped his bottles.

"See!" sputtered Foley, pointing to the broken bottles. "That's what I mean! That guy oughtn't to do that."

"No use crying over spilt milk," Ken Watson said.

Foley was furious. There was no telling what awful consequences he foresaw by the time his street sergeant should happen along—traffic blocked, car tires cut by the broken glass, unruly crowd, the rope falling over and breaking hotel windows . . .

We kept looking up . . . and we waited . . . and we waited. And nothing happened. Not a damn thing happened for five minutes. Then, suddenly, a tremor ran along the rope, as if it had started at the top and run the length to the lower end resting on the pavement. The lower end switched like a whip. And something fell at our feet.

"Cheez-us Kee-rist!" shouted Foley.

We looked. It was a human ear. It was as black as the ace of spades and bloody.

I started to reach for it, but Foley shouted, "You stop that! That's evidence!"

Then he tried to shake the rope again, calling up, "You, up there! You come down! You're under arrest!"

But the rope didn't need any shaking. It was trembling like an aspen leaf. Then it began to writhe. It was a horrible sight. It was almost human in its agony.

Suddenly it grew limp. I thought it was about to fall. But instead, it started to move as if someone above were pulling it up. The lower end lifted from the street, swinging freely. Foley grabbed for it. But it jerked away and kept on rising. And it rose right out of sight.

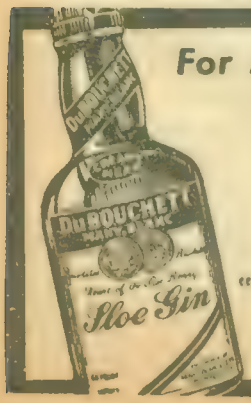
THE world is filled with curious people. I'm thinking about Mike Foley. He pinched us. And while he was hauling us off to the Twelfth and Pine Streets Station he kept muttering, "Playing hopscotch, huh?"

We were too shaken by what we'd just seen to protest very much. At Twelfth and Pine, Foley herded us into the house sergeant's room and announced, "Sarge, these muggs are under arrest."

The sergeant was Charlie McIlhenny. He'd never had any trouble with us and he didn't want any. He knew we all had police cards signed by the mayor.

"You kidding?" he demanded.

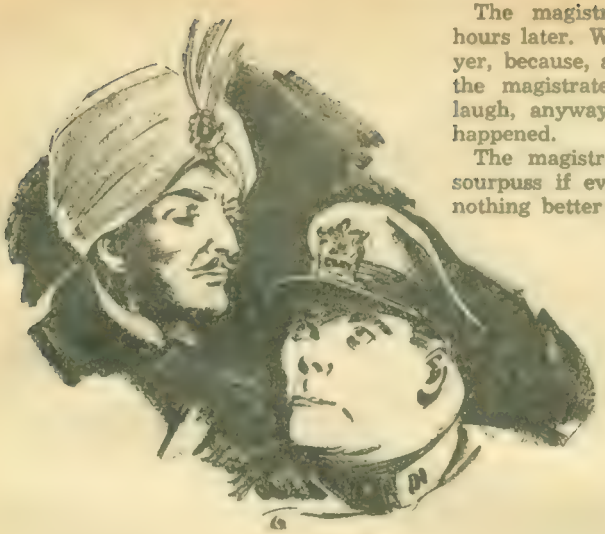
"I ain't kidding, and what's more I ain't drunk," Foley replied firmly. "I want to slate 'em."



For America's Finest Sloe Gin Fizz or Collins

DuBOUCHETT
MANY, BLANC
SLOE GIN
"THE ARISTOCRAT OF ALL SLOE GINS"
Produced and Bottled in U.S.A. by
MANY, BLANC & CO., INC. Chicago 32, Illinois

FREE!
COCKTAIL RECIPE BOOK
Beautifully illustrated in Full Natural Colors. Write Dept. P for your copy.
60 PROOF



Mr. Saraswati glanced down. I can't begin to describe the look he gave Foley—something like the look a man gives a good dog.

When nobody said anything, Charlie picked up his pen and asked doubtfully, "What charge?"

It was then that Foley floored us.

"The charge," he stated pompously, "is violating Section 4870, Article VIII, of the New Penal Code of 1939, as listed in Title 18, Crimes and Offenses, of Purdon's *Pennsylvania Statutes Annotated.*"

Charlie's eyes popped out. I guess ours did, too.

"What's what?" Charlie asked.

"The law against black magic," Foley said.

"You're nuts," said Charlie. "There ain't no such animal."

"And it reads," said Foley, "that whoever pretends for gain or lucre to effect any purpose by spells, charms, necromancy or incantation is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year, or a fine not exceeding $500, or both."

"I still say there ain't no such law," Charlie insisted.

"And I say there is," Foley retorted. And he reached over to a shelf and dragged down a volume of Purdon's, thumbed through it and stuck an open page under Charlie's nose. Sure enough, there it was.

Briefly, he told Charlie McIlhenny what had happened out there at Broad and Walnut. Charlie said Mike was seeing things, but when none of us denied it, Charlie couldn't do anything but slate us. Though Max Sax did mumble something about hypnotism.

"Oh, so it's hypnotism you want now?" bellowed Foley. "Well, let me tell you right now, lad, I'll charge you with Section—"

"Skip it," said Max wearily.

The magistrate's hearing was held three hours later. We hadn't bothered to get a lawyer, because, as Hal Morton said, we thought the magistrate would give Foley the horse laugh, anyway. But that wasn't the way it happened.

The magistrate was Phil Harbord. He's a sourpuss if ever there was one and he likes nothing better than to get a crack at a newspaperman. So when Foley started his spiel, Harbord was as dignified as the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. He didn't crack a smile; he listened as if it were the most common thing in the world for people to perform the Hindu Rope Trick on Broad and Walnut Streets.

But Harbord knows how far the law can be stretched and how far it can't. When Foley finished, he looked at Section 4870.

"'Whoever,'" he read, "'pretends for gain or lucre'—Officer Foley, did you see any lucre change hands?"

"No sir," Foley admitted, "I didn't see no lucre. That's why I'm preferring further charges here and now."

And then he hung a few more on us.

They rolled off his tongue as glibly as if he were a station master calling off trains.

"Violation of Section 4616, Article VI, known as 'Dangerous Exhibitions Prohibited . . .'

"Violation of Section 1116, Chapter 5, Old Penal Code 'prohibiting employment of a minor child for any theatrical performance or athletic exhibition without the consent of the parents . . .'

"Violation of Section 4867, Article VIII, which pertains to 'the destruction of milk bottles . . .'"

Foley paused for effect. He certainly achieved it. Every one of us stared at him. The man was a walking law library.

"Now," he resumed, and I swear he smacked his lips, "I reach the most important charge of all. I call your attention to Article VII, entitled Offenses Against the Person, and to Section 4715 under that article, dealing with mayhem, which reads, 'Whoever, on purpose and of malice aforethought unlawfully cuts out or

disables the tongue, puts out an eye, slits the nose, cuts off the ear . . .'"

Ken Watson drew a sharp breath. Collie Ives whistled.

"And to support the charge," Foley said, "I offer in evidence Exhibit A."

He began fumbling in his pocket. We knew what he was reaching for. He frowned, and reached into another pocket; then another. Red-faced, he turned his pockets inside out. He couldn't find it.

He couldn't find it because I had it. I'd pinched it while I was standing beside him in the house sergeant's room.

He sputtered and coughed and hemmed and hawed and sweated. It was the one piece of concrete evidence he had. Finally, he stammered, "Maybe I gotta withdraw that charge. I dunno what become of that ear."

Harbord looked at Foley suspiciously. He'd obviously enjoyed our discomfiture and I wouldn't put it past him, but that he was hoping to hold us for Court. Now he felt that Foley had let him down.

"Do you realize," he roared, "that if that charge of mayhem collapses, all the other charges collapse with it?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Do you realize," Harbord pursued, "that that ear is the only actual evidence you had?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

Foley looked about him in bewilderment. He was so utterly heartbroken that we couldn't help feeling sorry for him.

"Charges dismissed!" snapped Harbord.

WE broke up after that, and it wasn't until a couple of days later that I saw Collie again. He was pretty blue. He said he'd phoned the story in to his city editor, Tom Graves. And Graves told him when he sobered up to come into the office and then get paid off.

Naturally, it didn't help any that Hal Morton had failed to offer the story to the *Bulletin*. Said it was a hot potato. My own feeling was a bit different. I'm on rewrite, you know, and I figured it wasn't any of my business. I imagine the other fellows felt the same way.

I made it a point the next time I ran into Tom Graves to tell him the whole story. You see, it's a pretty terrible thing for a reporter to get a reputation for unreliability. Graves was very much interested, and said he'd like to read the stenographic report of the case before Magistrate Harbord. But, of course, a Magistrate's Court isn't a court of record.

As for Amby, I can't say for sure what happened to him. But that night a woman walking on Summer Street near Fifteenth found a colored kid wandering around in a daze. He was pretty well bruised up and, well, his left ear was missing. The police took him to Hahnemann Hospital where he was identified as Ambrose Washington, age 12, missing from home. The kid was scared stiff, and when he couldn't tell a coherent story the cops said it was hit-and-run.

Quite a long time afterwards I happened to meet Mr. Saraswati on Market Street. Naturally I asked what had happened to him. He wasn't too anxious to talk about it. But he did say that when he got up there, he found he'd forgotten some of the routine. Rather out of practice, I gathered. As far as I could make out, he'd got tangled up in the rope and when he couldn't unsnarl it right away, he thought it best to draw it up until he could get things straightened out.

I asked him if he'd performed the miracle since. He said, no, there was little satisfaction in it.

"And besides," he said, "nobody ever beneves it, anyway."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BUY

WAR BONDS!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE GUNS OF CAYUGA

By

CARL D. LANE

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CHICKERING

Before they could go aft, a mysterious black figure had dashed swiftly from the shadows of the piled freight, hefted up Mr. Vibbard like a sack of meal and disappeared over the counter into the lake.

I HAVE heard them often, the awesome Guns of Cayuga. They are neither legend nor fancy; they have boomed since before the days of the Indians and may very well be the thunder of the final Judgment Day, for even in my lifetime they have grown and strengthened. They visit our land at the close of a sultry period or ride upon us with the northern lights of later summer and our people will tell you how, then, our peaceful lake country becomes a dead and soulless land. Humans hasten to their own roofs and hush themselves and our kine do not low in the barns. From some distant, unknown place, the mysterious sound is borne upon us—from the lonesome quagmires to the north or, perhaps, as the old legends have it, from the unplumbed depths of mighty Lake Cayuga itself—and fills all creation with its sinister thunder. *Boom, bo-o-m, boom!* Evil and portentous the devil rhythm of the strange lake guns creeps into the hearts of all God's living creatures.

It has been said that the guns have maddened and maimed and killed and this must be so, for over the years they have made us a cautious and deliberate race. Even the murthering man, who was not one of us, felt their magic and murthered with a caution that baffled Grantha-Captain for a long time.

Grantha-Captain was old when he crossed trails with the murthering man; sixty-five or so, I should guess. He was called Grantha because he was true grandfather to me and the patriarch of our tight hill family, and Captain because he was owner and master of the paddle packet steamer *Aurora* upon which I served as purser. I can easily remember ten years back—I was seven at the time—when, around the

big red-windowed base-burner in Grandma's back parlour, he would explain the lake guns to us children this way:

He said that Cayuga and Seneca Lakes were connected by a mysterious subterranean channel far, far beneath the sunny farms of Interlaken and Lodi and Ovid and that a mammoth watery cavern gave off from it to the southward, toward that region around Taghonic Point where Cayuga has no bottom. In this dank, green cave lived a band of ghostly body snatchers — "Devils!"—Grandma would name them and look apprehensively over her shoulder. Down there, his white locks floating upward and the motion of his withered purple limbs slowed by the immense water pressures, the Old Man of the Lake and his serpent-creature ruled a vast kingdom of damned souls. There was Waneta, the Indian maiden who had drowned herself from a white canoe in the days of the Onondagas, and Tauggy, the Dwarf Stone Giant, and Mad Willy the snare drummer of Sullivan's Army, who was tortured until he went crazy and then was drowned in the lake in a pork cask, and John Partch, the British deserter who fired the funeral guns for his own death march to his chestnut-board coffin, and Spinkster John, the demented engineer of the steamer *Frontenac* on which forty folks were burned to death many years ago and who was condemned to hum the ballad of the horrible disaster for all eternity. There were these and many, many more wretched souls.

Grantha-Captain said that Tauggy was the only one who had any human conception of fun. It was he who hooked the shingle stones and shells onto the bright trolling lures of fishermen. People attribute the noise of the guns

in that frightful cavern to many causes, but most folks believe that it's Mad Willy who makes 'em. Up at the college in Ithaca some of the professors claim that gas wells or subterranean salt slides or marsh gas cause the guns. Now I don't know any of these things for gospel truth but I've heard them repeated so often that when the lake guns begin to boom a body can't help forgetting rational, but unproven, causes and ascribe it to the supernatural a little.

Oh, they were hideous tales for children and they left their mark, I suppose. And that's why, one sultry evening when my work in the purser's office of the *Aurora* was finished and I stood wheel-watch with Grantha-Captain, I suddenly shuddered in the quick chill that stole into the twilight of the wheelhouse. For the Guns of Cayuga, far off, muted and sinister, were commencing.

"HARK'EE, lad," whispered Grantha-Captain and paused from his whittling. "The sarpint is comin' for some poor soul. The Old Man set Mad Willy to callin' together his lake devils. Listen to the poor crazy boy a-drummin'. God protect the mortal they're fixin' to snatch."

"The guns are from over Seneca way," I said and listened.

"Cup your hands onto your ear," Grantha-Captain said. "Cup 'em, Johnny. Youngsters are always so danged positive."

So I made a funnel of my hands over my right ear and leaned out of the open sash toward Seneca Lake. But I couldn't hear the guns at all! I tried the other side, where the sound *wasn't*, and the guns pounded in my ear like the thumping of the *Aurora's* own great beam engine under racing steam. Grantha-Captain, his small shrewd eyes unsmiling, saw my confusion.

"Hah!" he snorted and blew into his fringe of a chin whisker. "And now where are they, Johnny? Out on the lake? Over against black Taghonic shore? Up on Poplar Ridge?"

"I don't know," I cried, for of a sudden the booming left off in my ear and instead was in the heaven and earth and water all about me and would nowise stay within my cupped hands. "Where are they now? Where are they?"

"Everywhere," said Grantha-Captain soberly. "Everywhere—and also nowhere. Man and boy, I've sailed this lake and I ain't never yet pinned 'em down to no mortal location, Johnny. Them guns are supernachrel, like a ha'nt. You wait, Johnny, somethin' evil's bound to happen."

"I'm not a baby any more," I said boldly. "You don't really believe those old legends, do you, Grantha-Captain?"

"I dunno, boy," my grandfather said softly. "When a man has nigh seventy years settin' on him, he ain't fool enough to believe or disbelieve. I ain't sayin' the guns ain't real but I ain't denyin' they mightn't be spirit either. Johnny, mind the inlet channel; you're downright fidgety, I d'clare."

So I steadied the *Aurora* on her course to Ithaca wharf and when I had the jackstaff lined on the great round docklight, I held the spokes stiffly in my cold fingers and listened to the lake guns. Behind their muted thunder I fancied I could hear the eerie dirge of Spinkster John and the hacking rasp of the voiceless Stone Giant and the agonizing cries of Mad Willy as the Indians peeled the skin from his living body. I could almost believe that in truth those awful guns were truly fearful hideous spirits.

It was at that moment that Big A, Little a, Aaron, our black steward, tore into the wheelhouse, his eyes rolling and his skin ashen gray.

"He's layin' theah on the main deck, Cap'n, suh," Big A gulped and shook as with a palsy. "Layin' right out, his eyes popped out 'n'—"

"Who, for tarnation sake?" demanded Grantha-Captain.

"Mist' Vibbard, suh, de drummer f'um Elmira."

"I didn't know we were carryin' him," Grantha-Captain shouted and reached for his cap. "Did the confounded fool get drunk again?"

"No, suh," Big A whispered. "Mist' Vibbard, he daid, suh."

"Dead!"

"Yas, suh," Big A shuddered. "Murdered!"

And so, like that—while we were doubting them—the Lake Guns had proved their evilness on our own boat, had touched our own peaceful lives.

Grantha-Captain rang the slow bell—for we were drawing into the narrow channel of Ithaca Inlet—and dashed from the pilothouse. By ear I could follow his hurrying footsteps, clattering down the companion ladders; then hear him bawl profanely for Mr. Elwell, the mate. Red Ned Mason, who was on the grating, took the slow bell and hushed the *Aurora* down to an oozing crawl. Our wharf-light, orange and huge like a rising moon, began to grow in the lakeshore darkness ahead. A wolf dog howled from the dank reaches of the Gorge. Mad Willy drummed wildly and evilly far off in the Lansingville hills, or perhaps it was over Trumansburg way, clear across the compass.

And then suddenly, like an ashen wraith, Big A slithered into the wheelhouse again. "Dem guns! Dem terr'ble wicked lake guns!" he sobbed and shook his trembling fist at the dreadful sound. "Johnny, yo' Gran'pap say to git dis hyar boat tied up afore we is all daid. Boy," he whispered, "de Ol' Man o' de Lake done got po' Mist' Vibbard!"

"Nonsense, Big A. He was drunk, he fell—"

"He was choked to he death, Johnny. Wit' balin' wire. I see it plain—an' we watch f'um de gratin' whar we go to fetch Red Ned to he'p us wit' de daided man, Mist' Vibbard he go."

"Go!"

"Yassuh. I—I see him go. De Ol' Man o' mebbe de Spinkster come out o' de witchin' da'kness an' he pick up Mist' Vibbard an' dey bofe walk off de fantail inter de lake. Right inter de lake an' down to de cave, Johnny . . ."

"You're crazy, Big A. Things like that don't really happen."

"Dey did! Oh, dey did!" Big A cried from his soul. "Johnny, listen dat—"

I listened and the whole world was silent again, for the Lake Guns had suddenly ceased and our land was beginning to live once again—all except poor Mr. Vibbard who had been just fresh murthered. Lightning began to flash and a squall was making out on the lake as it often does after the Guns. The silence of the earth was almost painful.

I docked the *Aurora*, feeling curiously secure and safe as the boat at last ground against her familiar pile wharf. Beside me, Big A suddenly fell to his knobby knees and blubbered an excited quaking prayer.

"Oh, Lawd, save dat po' man's soul. Snatch his everlastin' spirut f'um dem lake devils, Lawd, Lawd, ha' mercy, mercy . . ."

And then Grantha-Captain called for me from the real world. "Johnny come down here! Ain't nobody leavin' this boat 'til we check 'em—but I reckon the Old Man of the Lakes wouldn't check so good, by snum! You can't ask questions of a ha'nt!"

NOW I don't want to give it out that Grantha-Captain was a real true believer in supernatural matters or spirits and haunts, and such things. The shock of witnessing what he did would have caused any rational man to question verity. No, Grantha-Captain was a practical, sober, hard-sensed man and it did not take him long to understand that a mysterious murder on his steamer wasn't good for business. The *Aurora* was hardly cleared of her few passengers—for between us we knew every one of them and could locate them any time—before he had Big A running up to Green Street for the Law.

"You say to Sheriff Leach," Grantha-Captain instructed. "you say, come quick—it ain't no ordinary case. And mention that I ain't crazy or anythin' like that." Big A scooted.

We sat down to supper in the orlop galley, not very hungry, while the mate cleared the Ithaca freight. Grantha-Captain salted his eggs savagely and shook his shaggy head. "The trouble is, boy," he muttered more to himself

"Oh, Lawd, save dat po' man's soul. Snatch his spirut f'um dem lake devils," Big A blubbered.

than to me, "the body's gone. Now how can you prove murther without a body?"

I didn't know. Grantha-Captain said that only he and Big A had seen Mr. Vibbard at first. They had rushed forward to the engine room to get Red Ned's help but Red Ned reminded them that we were close in and he was standing by for bells. Then the mate had arrived, but before they could again go aft, a mysterious black figure had dashed swiftly from the shadows of the piled freight, hefted up Mr. Vibbard like a sack of meal and disappeared over the counter into the lake. They'd been left astern in one turn of the paddle.

"Big A's all unstrung an' excited," my grandfather mused, "an' I'm an old man—who maybe imbibed too much o' spiritous medicine. The sheriff'll figure that way. But Johnny, *I know what I saw!*"

"You're not looking for the Old Man of the Lakes or Spinkster John, then," I asked, and tried not to grin.

Grantha-Captain was thoughtful for a long minute. "No," he said as if he had thoroughly explored the possibilities, "no, I reckon I gave you the idea because we'd been talkin' so just the minute before, the lake guns boomin' an' all. I've lived a long time with those legends, boy; they're a deeper part of me than a youngster can appreciate. But I reckon a human mortal person done this deed."

Sheriff Leach's long legs got him to the *Aurora* a good five minutes before Big A returned and the first question he asked was

where was the body of this Mr. Vibbard who had been murdered. He listened soberly enough to Grantha-Captain's story and made some notes in a small brown book. When Big A arrived, all out of breath and still scared, about all that he could add was an incoherent muttering while his eyes rolled white at the horn-handled gun butt which stuck from the sheriff's belt. It did not make a very convincing story. Mr. Elwell, the chief mate, said he hadn't seen Mr. Vibbard after Canoga landing, when the drummer had gone ashore—nor had any other members of the crew.

We all went to the fantail and Grantha-Captain described just what he had witnessed there—Mr. Vibbard lying with his tongue hanging out, the stranded copper choking wire buried in his neck and how the mysterious figure had come from behind the piled freight or perhaps out of the hatch which gave to the after-storage lazarette below.

"Well," said Sheriff Leach, idly twirling a pair of handcuffs, "I don't see no bloodstains or signs of a scrap."

"Maybe he was killed some other place, or in his cabin," said Grantha-Captain testily. "An' chokin' ain't a bloody way to die."

"Captain," the sheriff said, "now don't you get riled, but I'm bound to ask. Did you, er—let's say as a precaution against the lake guns—take a snort or two?"

"Blast your lights!" roared Grandfather. "Johnny, didn't I tell you he would? No, sir! It's an ironbound rule that nobody drinks on my boat while on duty, myself included—an' I can prove that."

"I only asked, Captain. Did you check your passengers?"

"Every last one of 'em. We carried only eleven folks today an' I know each one personally—where they live an' who they married. Except a feller named Blunt. He wasn't known to me but he was to others an' I set down his address, out Interlaken way, 'tis. The crew is all 'counted for but Mr. Chase, my second mate, who was off duty today. I'll admit I don't know 'em all so good, steamboat folks being drifters like as not, but I don't reckon any of 'em was bad enough to murther."

"Well, there can't be a murderer without a victim, Captain," the sheriff said profoundly. "You got to have a body to prove murder, a corpus delicti, which is kind o' legal talk. I'll do some checking, o' course—say with Mr. Vibbard's firm and his family. Hardware drummer, he was, eh? But, shucks, the way it stands now I couldn't even get the police to drag the lake—'cept," he chuckled amiably, "maybe Chief Waller wanted a day's bass fishin'."

"Well, can I sail?" asked Grantha-Captain with annoyance. "If it gets out that I'm laid up for runnin' a murther ship or drunk on duty, my business'll be about as prosperous as sheriffin' in heaven."

"Certainly you can sail," grinned the sheriff and took up his hat. "So far there ain't been no crime, has there?"

"I'll bet you my sox you'll be back!" growled Grantha-Captain sourly at the departing sheriff.

THAT'S all the help we got from the Law for a while. It wasn't hard to see that Mr. Leach didn't take the matter very seriously and I couldn't blame him too much. Grantha-Captain was old—he looked old anyway—and a stranger couldn't be expected to recognize at once the alert, resourceful mind behind his weather-wrinkled face and his white whiskers. Big A was only a grown-up child, capable of believing almost anything. And Mr. Elwell's positive testimony did not help the wild tale.

Cayuga, like Seneca Lake, twelve miles west—they are connected by no channel known to mortals—was dropping, and since the exposed shore slime sent up strong fermenting odors, said to be poisonous and the cause of swamp vomit, Grantha-Captain had been bedding the crew at Mrs. Fidey's boardinghouse for the layovers. I was glad to get away from the evilness of the lake and the steamer. The great arched elms, the yellow gaslights of the Cornell College campus seemed warm and friendly. To the northwest, the storm still raged. Its thunder was considerable—though the sound was quite distinctly different from the lake guns—and the lightning flashes ran the length of ten counties. But only a few scattering drops fell in Ithaca.

"You got any ideas, sir?" I asked, when we had found our room in Mrs. Fidey's pleasant old house and Grantha-Captain had set out a jigger glass and his black medicine bottle on the marbled-topped dresser.

"Not any sound ones, Johnny," Grantha-Captain replied thoughtfully. "It's almost like that porridge-witted sheriff says. We've got to have a body. An' a motive. But those things'll show up, never you fear."

Grantha-Captain poured himself a drink and sat for a long time in the green-shaded lamplight studying the situation. I was almost asleep when a knock suddenly sounded on the door and Homer Chase, the second mate, slid into the room.

"What in tarnation are you doin' here?" Grantha-Captain asked querulously. "You're not on duty til' sailin' time, tomorrow noon."

"I was detained in town, sir, and couldn't get back home," said Mr. Chase with that cold, haughty formality which had always set him apart from warm neighborly folks, "so I thought I'd sleep on the *Aurora* tonight but the wharf watchman wouldn't let me on board. If

you'll give me a note to the man, sir, I'll not bother you further."

"No," snapped Grandfather with finality. "You can't sleep on the boat. The shore's all lake gas an', well, the boat's no place to sleep right now. You can stay here—but you'll pay for your own room, my snum! Homer, what in time're you shiverin' so for?"

With a sudden lurch, Grantha-Captain stood up and tipped the lampshade askew. "Great snakes, man!" he cried. "You're soakin' wet!"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Chase easily. "I got caught in the storm, sir.

"Well, you got caught in somethin', I d'clare. Here, have a drink, man."

Mr. Chase gulped the whiskey eagerly and steadied himself against the dresser. He mumbled his thanks and edged toward the door, not a happy-looking man at all. My grandfather checked him with an odd remark.

"Mr. Chase," said Grantha-Captain, "can you swim?"

The mate turned startled popeyes at him. "No, sir," he said. "I've spent my life on boats and on the sea but I never learned to swim."

"Well, no matter," said Grantha-Captain, chuckling. "But somebody's got to go overside an' fix the rudder backing chains; the shackle harps are near worn through. . . . Good night, Homer."

Mr. Chase's footsteps padded down the hall toward Mrs. Fidey's parlor. He was an odd man, so cold and austere and silent. He had small pig eyes that could look at you without expression or emotion of any kind and brindle-yellow mustaches sweeping from his mouth like steer horns; a blank enigmatic man indeed. But he was a first-class mate.

"Grantha-Captain," I said, after I had heard Mrs. Fidey show Mr. Chase to a room, "you know very well that Billy Damon put new shackles on those rudder chain only this morning at Cayuga."

My grandfather studied me soberly for a moment. "So he did, boy," he said quietly, "so he did. Now, Johnny, you go to sleep."

Five minutes later, he was breathing heavily in his wide bed. In the flashes of lightning, I could see him lying on his back, chin whiskers jutting sharply from his pillow, his hands folded under his head. I had the positive feeling that he was not sleeping, for when Grantha-Captain really sleeps he makes a thorough job of it and snores like the sound of the *Aurora* blowing her ashes.

WE loaded freight all morning, harvesting machinery and lumber and orchard crates and sacked feed. Checking and way-billing held me at my books at the bulkhead shipping desk on the main deck all the time and I had little opportunity to think about the events of the evening before. But I found my eyes stealing to the murthering spot on the fantail more often than not. Could the whole affair have been a dream, a nightmare induced by the fearful magic of the lake guns?

The freight thumped on board. Big A fished for perch from the after-rail break through which we sometimes loaded farm wagons or livestock. Red Ned Mason oiled his walking beams and the paddle shaft journals and after a while Mrs. Fidey's boy came with a note from Mr. Chase saying that he'd taken a terrible cold as a result of his soaking and had asked Mr. Elwell to give up his day off and take the run today.

Grantha-Captain came back from town, where he had been seeing the shipping agents, thirty minutes before sailing time. When I told him about Mr. Chase being sick he said nothing and, without knowing why, I had the feeling that the news didn't surprise him.

"Nuthin' happened here, I s'pose?" he asked carelessly.

"No, sir, just freight. Did you see Sheriff Leach?"

"I did, Johnny. An' nuthin' happened there either. He found out that Mr. Vibbard had been all through the central state clear to Oswego an' was scheduled to head west from Canoga an' cover the towns along Seneca Lake; then go to the factory at Elmira. Just a drummer's trip—an' Elwell's seein' him go ashore at Canoga makes Leach think he stuck to schedule."

"We stopped forty minutes at Canoga. He could have gone ashore and then come back, couldn't he?"

"'Course, an' prob'ly did, for a drink up to the hotel or to meet a customer. Great thunder, Johnny! I know he was on board after Canoga, don't I? Well, Leach believes he's this moment in one of those remote towns—McDougall or Romulus or Lodi or such. But I know he ain't an' what's more, Johnny, I found a motive."

"What!"

"Yep. Mr. Liddy, the manager of the Empire Forwarding Company, told me Mr. Vibbard had two jobs—one sellin' his hardware an' the other collectin' slow accounts."

"Then he may have had money on him, I mean a lot of it?"

"I don't know that yet. He'd covered a big territory an' was homeward bound. It could be he had money on him—an' that sure would be a motive for murther. Now, if the body shows up, I'll make that danged cocksure sheriff sing a different tune. That's what get's my dander, boy—to be taken for a dodderin' old fool."

At this moment, a stubby red-faced little man appeared at the gangplank and we heard him ask a stevedore for the whereabouts of Captain Warrander. "Hist!" clucked Grantha-Captain. "That's one o' Leach's deputies, name of Hands."

Deputy Hands was a civil and polite gentleman and reminded me more of a minister of the Gospel than the Law. He ducked his head to grandfather, then eyed me suspiciously. "Oh, he's all right," Grantha-Captain chuckled. "My grandson, Mr. Hands. Now what's itchin' the mighty mind of our sheriff?"

Mr. Hands peered about him as if every stave in the bulkhead had ears. "Don't look startled when I tell you," he whispered, "but we've checked up on things. Well, Captain, you know the fireman you hired on this spring?"

"Billy Damon? He's from the Troy Line on the Hudson River."

"Oh, he's from the Hudson all right," said Mr. Hands with a sniff, "but not from the Troy Line. He's straight from Sing Sing prison, hah! He was in for two years for armed robbery. Now what do you think of that, Captain?"

"Hmm," breathed Grantha-Captain. "So you think he did it, hey?"

"No, no, oh, not at all," the deputy denied vehemently. "It has nothing at all to do with this business which you think you saw. That isn't fact as far as the sheriff's office is concerned. But we think you ought to know that Damon is a criminal."

"*Was,*" corrected Grantha-Captain testily. "I got nuthin' against Billy 'cept he once in a while gets roarin' drunk, an' that ain't my bother so long as he don't get drunk on duty."

But Mr. Hands was full of his unearthings. "We're also checking on your passenger, Blunt. He's an odd one, he is. Lives up on the Hemper farm in Enfield but doesn't seem to work it, doesn't even keep a cow. Had a fight with his north neighbor for not keeping his burdock cut and never once even bid the time of day with his south neighbor. I take it the sheriff would like to know how he makes his living."

"So maybe Mr. Blunt did it, hey?" asked my grandfather wryly.

"There ain't been no crime yet," Mr. Hands pointed out heavily, "so how can we have suspects? Well," he continued, as if washing his hands of the whole thing, "I said what the sheriff said for me to tell you."

Grantha-Captain wasn't pleased about the visit. I don't know what he expected from the Law. Surely Sheriff Leach had little enough to proceed on. But I was rather surprised that Grantha-Captain had failed to mention that Mr. Vibbard might have been carrying considerable money. I could only guess that he was vastly rankled because his story was not believed and he was not going to be cooperative.

At noon, he grumpily signaled Mr. Elwell to drop the hawsers, bounced petulantly on the whistle treadle once and turned the wheel over to me. Then he stretched out on the worn leather settee against the after bulkhead and seemed to doze, his Congress gaiters paired neatly on the chart table and his stockinged feet crossed on the ledge of the port window.

Cayuga was utterly beautiful under a bright cloudless sky. Up toward the Interlaken shore, the land was fresh and verdant as if last night's storm had rained delicate hues of forest green and lush rich brown. The walking beam sawed at its accustomed rate, the paddle buckets thumped comfortably, and at the forward hurricane deck rail our passengers opened lunch boxes and sleepily watched Cayuga slip by. It was not hard to forget the dread business of the night before.

Grantha-Captain roused himself for the tea tray which Big A brought at one o'clock.

"Big A," said Grantha-Captain, "tell me exactly what you saw with me last night."

Big A rolled his eyes. "Ah don' rightly know, suh," he said. "Dat hull 'fair jes' too creepy to think on. But whatever you saw, suh, why, mah golly, Ah reckon dis boy see dat too, suh."

The old man waved Big A away. "No help from him," snorted Grandfather. "Johnny, there's a couple of things I'd like to know. One is, how much money Mr. Vibbard had, if any, an', if so, was it in paper or heavy coin. Also I'd like to know if Homer Chase can swim or not. He sure got turr'ble wet from a storm that splattered only a few drops in Ithaca."

"You—you don't think he did it, sir?"

"I'm only foolin' 'round with my thoughts, boy. But he could have. S'posin' he'd stowed away on the boat on his day off, in the lazarette where nobody goes. S'posin' he knew 'bout Mr. Vibbard's business habits an' in some way, some place, done this wicked deed an' then weighted Mr. Vibbard's body to bury it in the lake. That's good sound murtherin'—only Big A disturbed him an' began rousin' me. There was then nuthin' left 'cept for the murtherer to disappear, too. He did so an' swum to shore, claimin' the rain soaked him."

"But he wouldn't have come to you last night, would he?"

"Mebbe. He wanted to sleep on the boat last night. An' why? Well, mebbe to get the money he robbed Mr. Vibbard of. If I knew for sure the money was in coin, I'd have somethin' to go on, for a man couldn't swim loaded down with a large sum of metal money, could he, now?"

"No, sir. But there's Billy Damon, too."

"Shucks!" snorted Grantha-Captain. "Billy tended his boilers right to Ithaca wharf. I saw him go ashore, an' without even a parcel. Just bein' in jail don't make a man sure-bad, Johnny."

"He could have thrown Mr. Vibbard off the fantail and ducked back into the freight pile. Or Mr. Blunt could have," I said, fascinated by the possibilities. "Perhaps you only *think* you saw the murtherer go into the lake with the body."

Grantha-Captain grunted and leaned out of the starboard window. "Johnny," he said with

seeming irrelevance, "there's some crows circlin' over that oak stand near Atwater. See 'em? Now how far away is that?"

I studied the blue distance. "About a good mile, sir."

"Easily that. Well, there's exactly nineteen crows there. Now *you* count 'em!"

They were tiny specks against the hills, wheeling and dipping, and probably, though I could not hear them, scolding at a fox or a bear.

"Nineteen is right, sir," I said and marveled at the old man's eyesight.

"Hah!" Grantha-Captain chortled. "An' now you tell me again that I can't see what I see, hey? I tell you, the murtherer went into the lake, too. And don't you think he wasn't a swimmer either."

"Why don't you tell that all to the sheriff, sir?"

"Ar-r-r!" Grantha-Captain growled and relapsed into silence. "He's still got to get himself one of them corpus things, boy."

THE corpus delicti was provided the next day—but not by or for Sheriff Leach. We lay over at the home wharf at Cayuga town that night, Grantha-Captain feeling that "times was too propitious of developments" to leave the boat for the long buggy trip to our home up in the Cobalt Rill country. He was not far wrong. The wharf house telephone rang as we were loading hog meat and apples and mail-order stuff for the southbound trip the next morning and Grantha-Captain came back from the call looking grim and baffled.

"Early this morning," he said quietly, "Mr. Vibbard's body was found—in Seneca Lake."

"Seneca Lake!" I cried. "Then there must be a secret channel—"

"Keep fancy an' fact clear of each other," he said dubiously. "The tunnel's too much mixed up with those lake legends, which have nuthin' to do with cold stark murther. But, Johnny, that isn't all. There was no chokin' wire on Mr. Vibbard. They think he—well, just drowned, I guess."

"You better have Mr. Chase arrested," I whispered.

But Grantha-Captain shook his head and then proceeded upon a queer piece of business. He bawled down into the boiler room for Billy Damon and when the thin coal-pocked man stood before him he took him to task in a sudden rage. "Billy," the old man charged, "Sheriff Leach told me some things about you. I don't care much about them an' they ain't none of my affair unless you don't answer a certain question right. Now you tell me straight, Billy Damon, where'd you sleep last night?"

The fireman's eyes shifted uneasily and he licked his lips.

"Up to Hanagan's saloon," he said hollowly. "But I didn't sleep much. I was in a card game."

"Drunk?" queried Grantha-Captain sharply.

Billy Damon cursed. "That ain't your business" he cried. "I can do as I please off duty."

"You didn't maybe leave Hanagan's, say for a long ride through the night, hey?"

"No, I didn't. And," Billy added defiantly, "I can prove it."

"You'll have to, don't you fret," snorted my grandfather and sent Billy back to making steam.

But I noticed that he sent no one to Hanagan's to check nor did he go himself. I guessed that he was merely trying to divert suspicion, though what last night's whereabouts of the murtherer had to do with it all I could not imagine.

The day turned cloudy and overcast as we chuffed up the lake for Ithaca and way stops. Off Taghonic Point, over that part of the lake which has no bottom, the black clouds began to mass in the east and from them began to fall a thin cold curtain of mist. We lighted the navigation lights and once in a while Mr. Elwell, who had wheel watch, gave the whistle a long mournful blast against the packet sloops and net fishermen. It soon became a dreary depressing day.

I shuddered at the thought of that legendary cavern at this minute below our keel. I could almost believe again in those awful childhood stories. Was there, in spite of the geologists and the professors, an unknown subterranean channel between Cayuga and Seneca? Was the murder of Mr. Vibbard not human but one of those ghostly creatures of The Old Man of the Lakes? Had Waneta come in her phantom white canoe with Spinkster John or Tauggy or the Old Man himself and truly snatched Mr. Vibbard, torn his everlasting soul from him down there in their watery charnel house and cast his bloated body back to the world of mortals?

In the sunshine of our lake country you could reject such thoughts. But now, though it was only four o'clock, the day had sombered to gloomy twilight hues. The shore was remote and dim beyond the mist curtain, the sky lowering and now spitting an icy rain. It was not unnatural to forget rational matters—that there was now a mortal body and a human motive, that Billy Damon was a shifty weak creature with a prison record, that Mr. Chase was a cold unfriendly man radiating a certain cruelty and danger hard to describe, that Mr. Blunt was a secretive stranger without any apparent means of support. No, these things on a sunny day, away from the eeriness of Taghonic and its dreadful aura of death and the supernatural, would resolve themselves into hard cold facts to be fitted together and made to spell out a logical reasonable answer to the question: *Who murthered Mr. Vibbard?*

And, yet, as I look back on those days, the question was not so much who killed him as it was how to make the murthering man reveal himself. I think that was always Grantha-Captain's main objective.

Big A was sing-praying in a high nerve-wracking pitch in the galley, a plaintive supplication in which there was no hope, no salvation—just a bitter whining to the Lord to make hell-fire as merciful as possible, considering that our souls were damned from birth. The valves of the steam chest slapped with the inexorable beat of approaching doom, Billy Damon's coal shovel clanged and the open furnace draughts stained the gloom above the stack with the sullen crimson fire of hell. Over the ship had settled that deadness, that same portentous lifelessness which blighted our land when the Guns of Cayuga boomed. But they did not boom now. The earth was still—as if waiting for the next move in this tragedy.

Grantha-Captain provided the next action, a mysterious hocus-pocus which baffled us all for a while. He suddenly rang down the engine, then hailed for Mr. Elwell, Red Ned and Tom Plant, the bosun. With them, I dashed to the boat deck.

"Lend a hand here," Grantha-Captain ordered without preamble. "Red Ned, get some ashes sacked up for me. We're goin' to set this thing adrift an' see what happens."

I saw then that the old man had pulled a small, gray-painted canoe from the starboard lifeboat skids. The canoe was mine. I used to carry it on board and of a calm summer evening paddle it around the harbor or drift over the bars for whatever luck a trolling spoon would fetch me. I hadn't used it in a long time. In fact, it leaked badly, a matter which did not seem to trouble my grandfather now.

"Swamp her 'longside here," he said, when we had carried it to the maindeck and tethered it to lie abreast of the after-rail break. "Red Ned, get those ashes into her. Get her bore right down a'wash. Sink her, by dad!"

The little canoe slid under the dark waters of the lake as the sacked ashes burthened her. I could just distinguish her shadowy outlines, as if some strange lake monster were finning there. When the painter was cast off, the canoe slowly drifted from view.

"We'll see if there's a tunnel down there or not, by thunderation!" grumbled Grantha-Captain. "If there's a pull from Seneca, it'll be right here off Taghonic, I 'spect."

We watched the black lake in fascination, expecting I know not what.

Suddenly Tom Plant whooped and pointed. "Look! She's come up."

Sure enough, my little gray canoe rode the lake a'wash and made no motion to plunge into a subterranean tunnel.

"Capsized her ballast and riz," said Red Ned. "Cap, you want her?"

"No," snapped Grantha-Captain and puffed his pipe savagely, "I ain't licked yet, by snum! Mr. Elwell, Tom, get me one of those dressed hogs aft here."

It was a gruesome business. In the gloomy half-light, the pale hog carcass could have been a mutilated human body, the crew of the *Aurora* a band of ghouls. In dead silence, we watched the hideous thing float away, turning slowly in the current, now a stiff leg exposed, now the fat back sleek in the waning light, the bloody cavity where the vitals had been, gurgling and making horrible sucking sounds. . .

"If that thing shows up in Seneca Lake," Grantha-Captain said quietly, "we'll have our murtherin' man."

As he spoke the words, we heard a shudder behind us and turned to see Billy Damon duck behind the freight piles on the fantail from which he had been listening and observing.

"The damn fool!" swore Grantha-Captain, "the pure damn fool!"

I THINK that my grandfather was quite right in proceeding so with his own sleuthing. As he suspected and found to be true after a visit to Sheriff Leach the next morning—it being coaling day with no trip scheduled—the case, if such it was, was now in the hands of the sheriff of adjoining Schuyler County, for it was in that county that Mr. Vibbard's body had been found by some market fishermen. Leach was the Law in Tompkins County only and in those days the state was not so prompt in rendering its own aid in county police problems. Grantha-Captain made a sworn statement to Sheriff Leach for the coroner's inquest to be held at Valois, stating what he had witnessed. The sheriff didn't even treat the affidavit seriously but said he'd send it over to Valois. His opinion was, with some justification, that Mr. Vibbard had stuck to his schedule, disembarked at Canoga and started on his rounds down the east shore of Seneca Lake. He had merely drowned, perhaps first had become drunk. While murther was a possibility which the coroner's jury would consider, the body had been long in the water; no marks of foul play had been found in the first examination.

But this was all before Grantha-Captain received an answer to his telegram to Mr. Vibbard's employers. When he opened the message, just after supper at Mrs. Fidey's, he gave a boyish whoop of delight.

"I got 'er!" he croaked, "Listen to this, Johnny! 'Vibbard had four to five thousand dollars, though exact amount uncertain. As collections were mainly from rural mercantile houses, money was probably largely in bills and coin. By what authority do you question?' Hah! By what authority do I question? 'Twas

provident that I signed myself *Captain*. Let 'em guess whether 'twas police captain or not. Well, for one thing, I'll tell anybody I got a reputation for safe service to the public to keep up. For another, I don't like my wits questioned by a third-rate sheriff. Johnny, Hands gave Homer Chase a clean bill—he's unknown to the police an' has no record. But I don't like the chilly cuss anyway."

"Did you hear anything about the hog body?"

"No. Mord Latham, over to Hector, is keeping his eyes an' ears open for me. That hog ain't showed up in Seneca yet."

"Do you think it will, sir?"

"I dunno, boy," Grantha-Captain said, and sucked speculatively on his cold pipe. "Apart from them legends, there could be a tunnel connectin,' you know; kind of a scientific fact which them geology professors missed—which ain't surprisin' the way some of them dream 'long through life. But more'n likely there ain't no tunnel an' my hog experiment ain't worth a hoot. I'm inclined to look at it another way." He paused and fixed his pipe stem on my chest. "Johnny, a good murtherin' man, knowin' where the body was anchored in the lake, could grapple it up at night an' haul it over to Seneca easy as pie. A fox couldn't cover his tracks any better."

I let that simmer a while. It was possible, of course. A skiff pull to the Cayuga west shore and a midnight buggy ride to Seneca; yes, it was quite possible. I suddenly saw the link between the possibility and what I felt my grandfather was beginning to believe.

"And Mr. Chase was right here in Ithaca while this was happening," I said with heavy sarcasm. "Confined to bachelor rooms by a cold, eh?"

But Grantha-Captain wouldn't bite. "Don't you go gettin' any notions too previous, boy," he warned and commenced to whittle on a pine peg. "I know Homer Chase ain't a likable sort of critter at all. His tale about gettin' soaked in the rain is thin, but after all, it's possible, ain't it? An' he has got a cold. I saw him an hour ago. All we got, boy, is a smatterin' of queer facts an' mebbe a wish to hang this murther on Mr. Chase. That won't hold—not with me nor the court either. No, Johnny. We got to discover more in the motive before our bird scares an' lights out—which," he added sagely, "I don't reckon he will right off."

"Why not? If the jury over to Valois finds the choking wire marks or believes your affidavit more than Mr. Leach does, they'll investigate."

"Our bird won't fly till one thing happens, Johnny," Grantha-Captain said with conviction. "He won't fly till he gets the money he murthered for. No man could swim with four or five thousand dollars in coins and bills or get off this boat without my noticing it. Johnny, I got a notion that money's still on this boat."

"Do—do you know where it is?"

He looked around the room as if he expected to be overheard. "I got a right smart idea where," he said.

"Well, then," I cried, "get it!"

"Johnny," Grantha-Captain said sadly, "you don't do my name no great credit, I swear. Think on it. Don't you 'spect a murtherer would murther again to get that money back?"

"I suppose he would."

"I dang well *know* he would!" Grantha-Captain exploded and honed his whittling knife for a real session of chip-making. "I think I know a less fatal way to make the man reveal himself. Johnny, keep out of that after-fantail lazarette. Red Ned's watchin' it from his gratin' by day and nobody get's by the wharf watchman by night!"

THE next day, the dusty chore of coaling having been completed, Grantha-Captain had us all turn to at dawn to hose down the steamer. Even at six o'clock it promised to become one of those hot sultry

days which we call "weather breeders" in our country. There is an uneasiness, a tenseness in such a day. Long before the bronze sun has reached its pitiless zenith and holds the earth gasping and withering, folks begin to speculate upon the break which will come. Some hold that only a mighty thunder storm, probably brewing at the moment, will bring relief; others believe that northeast winds from the salt sea can alone save the land from a ruinous scorching. Northern lights were predicted, and earthquakes and tornadoes and I heard more than one man, as we mopped and hosed, say that the Guns of Cayuga would surely boom before moderate weather returned.

And it had to be on such a day, with the brassy sun hardly over the wooded rim of Cayuga Heights, that the *Aurora* fell heir to one of those odd chores that sometimes comes to steamboats. Mr. Liddy, of the Empire Forwarding Company, came to the wharf in a dither and what he wanted, he told Grantha-Captain, was the *Aurora* for the whole day. Two knock-down fifty-head barns had come in for the Acker farm, which had been largely destroyed by a fire the previous winter. The traveling construction foreman for the barn company had recruited his carpenters and roofers locally and was sore because the barns had not yet been delivered.

"It's my own fault," admitted Mr. Liddy wryly. "Been over to Owasco trying the bass. Well, Captain, I'll charter you. There's an old stone crib dock where the Acker farm touches the lake at Dark Glen Cove. Get in as close as you can. The boys'll unload and be barn-raising by noon."

Grantha-Captain made arrangements for our little competitor, the *Dove*, to take the regular freight and passengers, then told Mr. Chase, who had come on duty again, to warp us around to the Empire warehouse. The carpenters loaded timbers and roof arches and millwork and corrugated roofing and tie-ups on us until we were clear down to the safe-load line. It was almost noon before we commenced the long trip to Dark Glen Cove up on the north shore of Taghonic Point.

Grantha-Captain took the wheel himself. He stood in his stocking feet. His uniform jacket hung over the settee and he was stripped to his red woolen undershirt which he wore summer and winter, now stained wet from the mere effort of living on such a hot, humid day. From time to time he scowled darkly, then finally blurted, "Johnny, did you notice?"

I had noticed nothing—though I was quite aware that Red Ned, from his tipped-back chair outside the engine room, was not dozing as he pretended to be doing, but was keeping his eyes alertly toward the after-lazarette.

"Is anything wrong, sir?"

"Can't say—yet," Grandfather said. "But I notice that that queer Mr. Blunt is one of the carpenters. Now that's a peculiar thing, eh?"

"Yes and no," I said. "It shows that he at least works for his living. You can't connect him with the murther just because he's shiftless, or inherited some money to live on or because we don't know much about him, can you?"

"We'll see," Grantha-Captain replied and narrowed his eyes. "If any of those three—or anybody else, too, by snum!—goes to the lazarette, Red Ned'll report it to me. An' there's only one thing a man would go there for."

"The money, of course."

"'Course. Nothin' else there but old paint cans an' tar an' a towin' hawser—an' we ain't paintin' or tarrin' or towin'."

"You're sure the money is there, Grantha-Captain?"

The old man spoked the wheel, setting the jackstaff against the distant gash in the green shore that marked Dark Glen Cove and leaned close to me. "Boy," he whispered, "last night after you'd gone to sleep I snuck down to the boat an' I *saw* the money. Two sacks of it, little canvas pokes weighin' mebbe twenty pounds each, tucked 'way down under the coiled hawser. So you see, I know what I'm talkin' about. Johnny, keep your eyes peeled. Weather like this fetches raw nerve-ends right to a man's outside hide an' events are likely to happen."

But nothing happened during the long torrid afternoon. Because of the lake level and our heavy cargo we could not get within a half cable of the Acker dock and had to anchor in the deep water under the steep slate cliffs which surrounded the airless Cove. Sweating and cursing and drinking copiously of a cool branch which trickled through a rocky ravine, the barn carpenters rafted their materials ashore. Here Mr. Acker's oxen team snaked them up an ancient tree-grown cart path to his fields above.

Though I watched whenever I could, nobody went near the lazarette. Grantha-Captain sat in his old Boston rocker on the boat deck where he could overlook the unloading operations superintended by Mr. Chase. I could not tell what he was thinking. He, too, being on duty, drank only branch water. Flies and insects droned in the still air, the broad lake beyond the almost land-bound cove shimmered in the heat. Billy Damon's shovel, firing lazily for waiting steam, would scrape and you wanted to shriek at the mere thought of more heat.

The crew dozed in the hot shade. Big A fished for crappies in a desultory manner from the rail break, his black toes playing in the tepid water. It was a gentle enough scene and easy enough to forget that among us a murtherer stalked, that sooner or later he

would try to snatch those money bags and quit the place of his crime forever.

Grantha-Captain alone gave the lie to the scene. He whittled furiously. At his feet lay a carpet of chips and I knew that he was vastly disturbed—or scheming—or just waiting. . .

"We can't finish unloading till after dark, sir," Mr. Chase called to him toward the end of the afternoon, "and the men will have to have a rest soon."

"Give' em a rest," snapped Grantha-Captain. "Mr. Chase, get the cement ashore and under cover next; a man can't say what kind of weather this heat will fetch after dark. An' tell Billy Damon to bank his fires. We'll lay over here an' pull out for Ithaca at five tomorrow mornin'."

A ghostly canoe moved toward us while the figure in it paddled noiselessly and hummed a weird dirge.

"Aye, aye, sir," returned Mr. Chase cheerily and fondled his mustaches. "A good idea, and it'll save you some coal."

"I thought you'd like it," muttered Grantha-Captain under his breath and applied himself to his whittling.

After a supper that held slight interest for any of us, I went ashore on one of the rafts. It was a mite cooler in the thick evergreen growth of the cove shore and the sun was at last setting in a vast speading stain of bloody scarlet in the western sky. But no breeze came with the evening.

I found Big A sitting on a flat rock some distance away from the dock. "Dere's yo' breakfus', Johnny," he grinned and held up a string of crappies and perch. "Ain' dis jes' fine weather, hey?"

I groaned. "What's fine about it, Big A? Don't you feel something behind this awful sultriness, something dangerous, like death?"

"Naw, naw," laughed Big A. "Johnny, I d'cla' yo' am de wrong color to 'preciate pretty weather lak dis." And he commenced to hum.

I HAD been aware as the daylight faded of a white grayish mass in the lake, half hidden under the overhanging pine boughs a few rods from where he sat. I paid no great heed to it. Big A was catching fish, and I was living the thrill of each bite with him. But I suddenly realized that I should give attention to that queer whiteness for, as the thing took on shape in the growing night, I saw that it was my old canoe, the one which we had sent off to find the mysterious channel to Seneca Lake.

And here it was—a good six miles from where we had launched it. It proved there was a strong current toward Taghonic Point all right, but that was all. Grantha-Captain was probably correct about Mr. Vibbard's body. It had been deliberately carried over to Seneca to divert suspicion from Cayuga until the hidden money could be recovered.

I bailed out the antique craft. By sitting on the extreme end opposite the leak, I could keep the hole out of water. But I was not much interested in its salvage and pulled it ashore—with an intent which Big A did not miss.

"Johnny, don' you stomp on dat boat!"

"It leaks fearful and it's as old as Grantha-Captain," I told him. "Besides, I got a new skiff boat."

"Gimme her, you don' want her, Johnny?" he asked eagerly.

"Sure, you can have it. Maybe you'll catch

more'n just crappies and perch with a boat."

He was enormously pleased and immediately set about carving a paddle, a chore which the nibbling fish interrupted frequently. "I'se gwine fix her up good." Big A said beaming. "Ah'll tarsy up dat hole an'—"

"You'll do no such thing. Not till I say it's all right," I told him sharply. "Big A, you keep away from that lazarette where the tar is, you understand?"

"Yassuh, Johnny," Big A promised. "'Tain' nuthin' dar, only Billy Damon he sometime keep his whiskey dar. Johnny, you don' 'spec' dat killin' Spinkster John done gwine hide hisself down dar, do you?"

"Never mind," I told him. "You just keep away until—well—until something happens."

I left him to his fishing and went back on board the *Aurora*. The barn materials were almost all ashore now. The carpenters, of whom Mr. Blunt, his blue overalls soaked with perspiration, was one, handed the last of the roofing overside. Billy Damon lay curled on a chest of life preservers, seemingly asleep. Mr. Chase sat on the chain that hung in the rail break and swung idly. The bulkhead lamps were lighted and two bats beat crazily at the square glass frames. Red Ned Mason had deserted his watching chair but at no time was the hatch to the lazarette out of his sight.

You could feel an unrest, a nervous crossness in the men. They did not josh each other, they did not even curse. The weather break had not come yet and there was no relief for parched bodies, for raw nerves. . .

I don't know who cried out first. But suddenly an agonized frightened scream rang out. It reverberated against the cliffs and came echoing back to tear at your insides. Somebody whispered ominously, "Look! Out—out on the lake!"

"Great Father, it's the Phantom Canoe!"

"Waneta!" cried someone. "That poor damned Indian Waneta!"

Toward us, like a ghostly wraith hung between black heaven and black hell, silently moved a white canoe and in it a vague formless figure paddled with noiseless strokes and hummed a weird dirge, half song, half prayer.

"She's comin' for somebody!" a man yelled and choked.

"Listen, you fools," I blurted, "show some sense. It's nobody but—"

But my cry was suddenly drowned by a fusillade of shots close to my ear. Mr. Blunt, with a horrible animal cry, had whipped out a revolver and was frantically firing away at the white canoe.

"Stop it! I tell you it's only Big A!"

And then I was suddenly aware of my grandfather charging into the group. His head was lowered, his mouth grim, his short arms flailing.

"Put down that gun, you blasted fool!" he roared and butted savagely at Mr. Blunt.

He hit him square and powerfully between the shoulders. The carpenter's arms flew up, the gun splashed into the lake and, like a man skidding on ice, Mr. Blunt was propelled thwartships. He made a wild grab for a rail stanchion, missed, and tripped on a gangplank cleat. Then, clawing at the air and yelling, he crashed into Mr. Chase, still on his chain, and both men went through the rail break and into the lake with an immense splash.

Big A was moaning in fright from his ghostly craft. In the water, Mr. Blunt cursed horribly and swam for the steamer. But Mr. Chase gurgled and choked and yelled for help and beat the quiet water frantically.

"I'll be damned!" Grantha-Captain croaked, then shouted, "Throw Mr. Chase a life ring. Get him aboard 'fore he drowns dead."

A life ring whistled through the air. Tom Plant began shucking his clothes to go to the mate's rescue. Somebody rigged a ladder over the side.

"He can't swim!" I whispered hoarsely. "'Grantha-Captain, Mr. Chase can't swim—just like he said."

"Shut up, Johnny," Grandfather growled in my ear. "Shut up tight!"

Mr. Chase was being helped up the ladder, a sodden and forlorn figure indeed. Mr. Blunt climbed sourly over the rail, dripping like a wet dog. Grantha-Captain bawled for Big A to come aboard—he'd give him a proper whipping, by dad!

And then suddenly Red Ned came running. "Captain," he cried, "Captain, Billy Damon's just sneaked into the lazarette!"

Grantha-Captain reached grimly to the pin rail where the cargo tackles belayed and took two of the heavy iron pins, one in each hand. Red Ned grabbed an oak capstan bar. Somehow I found a folding deck chair in my hands. "Come on!" yelled my grandfather and we closed in around the lazarette hatch. Billy Damon didn't have a chance.

We could hear him rummaging around down in the black storage hole.

"Come out, Billy," Grantha-Captain called to him. "Come out peaceable an' you'll not be hurt. But if we have to come after you. . ."

Billy Damon sobbed down there in his black trap. He burst into savage oaths. All was quiet for a long time and then we heard him step on the ladder. "I'll come," whispered Billy Damon. "Don't hurt me. I'll come."

He wasn't much of a figure for a murtherer. Skinny, blue-shanked and scared, he cringed on the deck under the blows poised over him.

"I was only after a bottle I had there," Billy Damon said sullenly, his eyes frightened. "The heat—a man has to drink . . ."

"Yes," snapped Grantha-Captain. "Yes, I reckon I know what you were after, Billy. Boys, bind his hands and lock him up in a stateroom."

He wasn't much of a figure for a murtherer. Skinny and scared, he cringed on the deck under the blows poised over him.

"You can't!" screamed Billy. "I ain't done nuthin'. You ain't the Law!"

"On this boat I am," Grandfather stormed. "I'm the Law till I turn you over to the sheriff at Ithaca for murther, Billy Damon."

They carried Billy away then, sobbing and cursing and crying out that he had murthered nobody, never, never, never . . . You could almost believe him, so real was his pleading, so pitiful his thin little body.

Grantha-Captain took a lantern and climbed down into the lazarette. He came back a moment later with the two bags of money in his arms. "Well, that's the end of the mystery, boys," he growled. "Now, for goodness sake, forget about this awful business an' get hold of your ragged nerves. The weather'll break soon an' life'll go on again, I d'clare!"

He turned away, pausing briefly to look at Mr. Chase who was quite recovered from his near drowning, then jerked his head at me. "Come along, Johnny. A bit of sleep is what we all need."

We climbed the companion stairs to the boat deck.

"Look," I whispered, "perhaps Billy was really after whiskey, sir. Big A told me he sometimes hid his bottle there."

Grantha-Captain clucked as if he were annoyed. "Johnny, don't be a fool," he said quietly. "Billy Damon didn't do no murther. Come 'long, boy!"

GRANTHA-CAPTAIN'S cabin on the *Aurora* was the master's traditional S-1, that is, the forward cabin on the starboard side. There was a big cherry double bed in Grantha-Captain's room, for he liked space when he slept, and a great paneled clothes press next to it. On the wall opposite, a bookcase stood under the single barred window. There was also a china cuspidor and a wash stand and a battered horsehair chair which I first remember in my grandmother's back parlor.

The cabins were stifling. Against the yellow enamel of the bulkhead staving, weird blue shadows played in fitful bursts for, in the black heavens above Taghonic, the northern lights had commenced their mysterious searching and probing. The weather was not far off.

Grantha-Captain went silently to his room. There were things to say but my grandfather was not in a talkative mood. I wriggled out of my soggy shirt. In the adjoining cabin, I heard the musical clink of coins as he stowed the money pokes in some secret place. It seemed to me that sleep this night would be possible only on the deck outside. But before I got the mattress rolled, ready to follow the notion, Grantha-Captain's voice whispered cautiously at the door. "Johnny, come into my cabin—an' don't cherish the idea of sleep tonight."

I went into his cabin.

"Take your shoes off," my grandfather said.

"Look." I said, as I sat in the horsehair chair and took off my shoes, "there are some things that don't set right."

"I agree," said Grantha-Captain, "but I told you long ago what I saw that night, didn't I? Did I ever tell you that Billy went into the lake with Mr. Vibbard's body?"

"No, sir. But who did? That Mr. Blunt sure went crazy as a loon tonight, shooting so at the Phantom Canoe as if it were coming to get him and crying out in a regular death yell. But if Mr. Chase can't swim . . ."

Grantha-Captain grunted impatiently. "We'll know who did it before daylight, I 'spect," he said. "Johnny, if the murtherer wants his money before it goes into Sheriff Leach's safe tomorrow morning, he's got to come an' get it. It's his last chance an' I think he's a desperate man." My grandfather handed me one of the cast-iron belaying pins. "I got me one, too," he whispered. "If you have to, swing for his head, boy—an' don't hold back or you'll be a dead un!"

"You can't," I cried. "He'll suspect a trap!"

"I don't think so," Grantha-Captain said, nodding complacently. "Why d'you think I asked Billy where he'd been the night before the body turned up in Seneca? What d'you think I got him cooped up for? No, Johnny, as far as the real murtherer knows, we got our man an' won't look for another. I don't reckon he'll foresee a trap."

Grantha-Captain blew out the candle in the hurricane chimney. Then he emptied the lucifer box and gave me half the matches. He fussed at the bed for a long time and when he stepped back I saw that he had arranged the bedding so that, in the light of the Borealis, I would have sworn that he himself lay peacefully sleeping under the white sheet.

"Lock the door," he instructed. "Then take the key out. It'll give us warning."

Then he reached out in the darkness, curled my fingers around the smooth lethal weight of the belaying pin and told me what to do when the murthering man came.

I stood in the darkest corner of the tiny cabin listening to the creaking of the boat, scarcely daring to breathe. A rat scrampered across the waterways once. An owl found a roost on a boat davit with a great flapping of wings, then settled down to a mournful screech. In the shore reeds, a great bull frog croaked as if from some remote land; the pilot house clock beat out four double strokes, midnight.

"Thunderation!" Grantha-Captain growled from his concealment beside the clothes press. "I wish I could whittle!"

The northern lights played in awesome splendor over the starless sky, their gleam falling in tinted shafts on the worn carpet which

I had seen by the pale yellow beam of the candle the body of the man who had come to kill Grantha-Captain.

covered the cabin floor. When the orange lights came, the pattern seemed aflame, then, imperceptibly at first, the orange would turn to purple and blue and then vivid green and the flower patterns on the carpet were turned into horrid leering death heads.

The night remained unbearably humid and airless. But my fingers clutched the iron belaying pin in an icy grip and once in a while, with my body wet and moist, I would shudder with a very real chill. In vain I listened for the thunder which would bring relief, for the first stirring in the dead air that would warn of a break in this terrible still night. But, like Grantha-Captain and myself, the whole world was still and waiting for the murthering man.

THE clock struck one, then the half hour, then two—and before the thin sound had died against the slate cliffs, a gentle cautious scratching came from the cabin door and I knew that someone was picking the lock with a wire.

I don't know how long I waited there in the stifling darkness. But after an age, I felt a slight stirring of the air, then the dank smell of bilges and steam oil and galley fat. They were boat smells, from inside the boat, and I knew that the door had been opened and the murthering man was creeping slowly, slowly toward my grandfather's bed.

I gripped my weapon. Grantha-Captain feigned a snore. I realized the northern lights had ceased, that they no longer visited the cabin to give it vague but comforting form. And then, suddenly, above the soft tread of the murthering man, I caught, far-off and muted, the first faint drumming of the Guns of Cayuga. Waneta and the Old Man of the Lake and Spinkster John and their wild band were coming for somebody.

Grantha-Captain breathed softly. Soft footsteps, softer than a cat's chuffed on the carpet. Against the window a shadow moved ever so slightly, as if a man were crouched over the bed, waiting, waiting . . .

Suddenly I heard an awful curse and mighty grunt. An arm swept across the patch of window light, plunging downward. The wicked gleam of a shiny steel blade pricked the gloom, a body fell upon a body . . . Then I heard a dull mushy thud and I almost sickened for I knew that Grantha-Captain's belaying pin had crashed into a skull.

"Make a light, boy!" cried Grantha-Captain.

The Guns of Cayuga pounded and drummed wildly. They filled the earth and the tiny cabin and beat against my brain. My fingers shook horribly as I fumbled for a lucifer.

"A light! The critter's stirrin'!" yelled my grandfather and I heard his weapon again crash upon the murthering man.

I remembered with a shudder how I had once beat a snake to a bloody pulp with a stone until it writhed no more—then the lucifer flared in my hand and, as suddenly, died.

But I had seen by its pale yellow beam the body of the man who had come to kill Grantha-Captain. It was sprawled on the cherry bed, the arms outflung, a long keen dagger in one clutching hand and it was dressed in blue carpenter's overalls.

"Mr. Blunt!" I cried and struck another match. This time it caught and I touched the candle with it.

"He s'posed to make curious eyes think just that," snorted my grandfather, "Look, Johnny!"

I turned to the bed and then I saw that it wasn't Mr. Blunt. It was Homer Chase—his pig eyes closed, his brow waxen, his loose mouth under the brindle mustaches bubbling blood in little gummy spurts that seemed to keep time with the beating of Mad Willy's drum.

"He ain't dead," said Grantha-Captain and commenced binding Mr. Chase's wrists with a rope end. "Now Johnny, for the love of heaven, let Billy Damon loose an' have him get up steam. We're sailing for Ithaca this minute!"

I ran and roused up Red Ned and Tom Plant and by three o'clock we were licking it through the cleared, cooled night.

"What had me fooled, I'll admit fair," Grantha-Captain told Sheriff Leach, "was that Chase didn't swim when he tumbled into the lake tonight. Things sure pointed right at Billy Damon then. But a man couldn't think clear or quick in that crazy heat an' it was only while we were waitin' for Billy to come out that I commenced to think that Chase had shammed. Well, he did, Sheriff, an' you can take him an' welcome."

Sheriff Leach had come at once. He was a good enough sleuth when he actually had his facts clear in front of him. He'd searched Mr. Chase's cabin and found not only a coil of stranded copper wire such as had choked Mr. Vibbard's life out, but his wallet and papers.

"You were right from the beginning, Captain," the sheriff said, and added with ghoulish glee, "Chase will hang, I promise. The coroner's jury came up with a verdict of murder. Well, Captain, Mad Willy is beating his drum for nuthin', eh? Nobody got killed tonight."

"I dunno," shrugged Grantha-Captain. "I ain't one to believe or disbelieve."

And then Grantha-Captain was once again proved right—or was it wrong?—for Deputy Hands came running on board, his nightshirt flapping. "Sheriff," he cried, "you're wanted at once. Last night, between two and three o'clock, a woman was murdered over to Slatersville Springs."

Suddenly, then, the Guns of Cayuga at last ceased and died and our land and our people began to live again—all except the poor woman over in Slatersville Springs who was fresh murthered.

COSSACK CORRESPONDENT

By RUSSELL E. SMITH

A Fact Story

ILLUSTRATED BY EDD ASHE, JR.

"Being a man of peace I went but lightly armed."

BYLINES in profusion from war correspondents from a dozen fronts on the pages of our newspapers today remind us that there was once a time when a war correspondent's news sometimes made or broke a country and its leaders. Now, with censorship so important and with the radio piping news in an instant to the whole earth, such is not to be expected. But there *was* a time—and thereby hangs the saga of Januarius Aloysius MacGahan.

No one but a correspondent ever really sees a battle. The soldier is too excited, the general too busy getting news from each section and giving orders. MacGahan saw—and told. He was "different" because he merely applied the simple rules of ordinary morals and business honesty to the business of writing the news.

Back from the flowing "Blue Danube" in Bulgaria, the traveler today, were he conversant with the language—(and could go there)—would be vastly surprised to find that the most interesting poems and stories are those told about a farm lad from Ohio who restored the liberty and independence of Bulgaria, lost to the Turks for five hundred years!

Mightier by far than the million curved scimitars of the Turkish hordes, the pen of this Titan of war correspondents—J. A. MacGahan—carved out the freedom of this land for the peasants.

Praises of this young Ohioan—he was but thirty-four when he died—are raised in song and memorial wherever Bulgars gather, and the anniversary of his birth is still commemorated by them.

In life, he rode through their villages with hordes of Bulgars kissing his hand and hailing him as their savior. He was even suggested as King and Ruler of their country, the freedom of which his news dispatches had made possible. The hearts of men and nations were touched by this American's vivid descriptions of the atrocities of the Turks against the Balkan peasants and the result was the fall of a British ministry which supported the Turk against the "Bear that walks on two legs." Popular indignation in England, attested by hundreds of mass meetings, opened the way for the entry of the Russian Army into the field

and the freedom of Bulgaria from the "unspeakable Turk" was finally accomplished by the victorious Russian forces. It was the Czar's armies which did the field work, but it was J. A. MacGahan's pen which put that army into the field.

However, important as were this Irish-American lad's services to Bulgaria in 1876, his other services to world history are equally notable. In a few short years, from 1870 to 1878, he "covered and interpreted" the *Virginius* affair in Cuba, the Carlist uprising in Spain, and the Franco-Prussian War. Moreover, he was the only American newsman at the Paris Commune, and sole correspondent with the *Pandora* expedition to the North Polar regions.

He died at Constantinople while engaged in nursing another newsman and was buried there. Six years later his body was brought back on an American warship for burial at his home in Ohio, a unique procedure in the history of America.

The concensus of other war correspondents of the period was that he was by far the best of them all. In writing, gathering news, and an uncanny ability to get places under astoundingly difficult conditions, he had no equal. Through sheer personality he won the esteem and confidence of great commanders and though he never abused it, this confidence naturally gave him an insight into military plans. He frequently made suggestions which the High Command found invaluable.

The term "Cossack correspondent," "will-o'-the-wisp-of-war-writers" and similar titles made him the idol of such men as George Augusta Sala, Archibald Forbes, Bullard and others of his time. He was the Admirable Crichton of the newspaper fraternity, master of nine languages, a superb horseman and a crack shot.

He moved so fast that not even the famed Cossack raiders of the Don could catch him when he rode hundreds of miles through the deserts of Central Asia in pursuit of the Russian Army and wandered amid perils that had stopped several scouting expeditions of the Russian staff. His book, *Campaigning on the Oxus*, describing his experience, is high in literary value and a classic of adventure.

The methods of war correspondents in his time were more perilous and personal than in our modern day of wireless and other swift

means of communication. Latter-day armies do not wish their moves recounted so quickly, thus giving immediate information to the enemy. MacGahan and his kind had no muffler on their stuff; their job was to get the news, write it and send it back to their papers as quickly as possible.

Publicity is the greatest agency for the cause of peace; its use in the case of Bulgaria was a world benefaction, but the world in general has almost forgotten its association with the name of J. A. MacGahan—scholar, linguist, traveler, shrewd observer, politician and powerful writer of telling phrase.

This Ohio farm lad would have laughed had any such career been predicted for him.

MacGAHAN was born on June 12, 1844. He died in Turkey on June 9, 1878, but what he had seen and told in those short years made history. And most of it was condensed in the last eight years of his life, for he did not start his career as a foreign correspondent until 1870.

He had been christened Januarius Aloysius MacGahan. His mother was left widowed when he was seven and she spent the little money left her on his education. He wanted to teach school and did for a brief time at Huntington, Indiana, then St. Louis.

When but three years past his majority, he went to Brussels, where he studied law. For some time he lived in Germany and France, where he acquired languages. He was at work in Brussels when Louis Napoleon declared war on Prussia. A representative of the New York *Herald* came to Brussels and MacGahan asked to be taken on. He was accepted and soon began to "scoop" the field.

He joined the headquarters of the Algerian hero, Bourbaki, who was in command of the Army of the Soire, and accompanied him on his disastrous retreat to Switzerland after the defeat by the Prussians at Belfort. Then to Bordeaux where he wrote a series of letters and interviews with the leading statesmen of France.

"The horses sank nearly to their bellies in the sand and we were obliged to dismount."

Then Lady Luck dealt him a master hand, for he returned to Paris on the memorable day of the attack of Montmartre in 1871. Following a regiment along the streets one day, during this critical period in French history, he found himself to be the only reporter present at the opening of the Commune!

His courage, tact and industry made him famous in the city and his graphic reports to the *Herald* increased his fame in America.

Prison was his lot when the Versailles troops took Paris. Because of his known friendship for the Pole, Dombrowski, he was in peril of his life as a friend of that great champion of the common people. He was denounced on many sides and several times nearly paid for his devoted friendship with his life. Now the guillotine awaited him!

The American Ambassador, Washbourne, the only foreign diplomat who remained in Paris through the siege, intervened and saved his life.

After the Commune, MacGahan wandered over Europe penning his vivid tales of what was happening and what it meant.

He went to the Crimea and stayed at the summer palace of the Czar. Here he met his future wife, a beautiful young girl of the Russian nobility, and thus began his intense interest in the Russian people and the cementing of friendships which were to mean so much to him and the world when unhappy Bulgaria needed his services.

Russians liked this breezy, handsome, red-bearded young man with the virile pen. He had just been through the war in France and Russians were much interested in his experiences. He had the misfortune to break his ankle while in Yalta and his bedroom for weeks was the headquarters of the most interesting group in that Crimean summer palace. When the summer was over it was natural that MacGahan should go to St. Petersburg with the society and army group that had summered at Yalta. At the court he was beloved as elsewhere. Here he grew to learn the Russian mind and soul and in later years in Bulgaria he remarked on how like they were to the Russians, in appearance, thought, and language. There was reason for this, as will appear.

When General William Tecumseh Sherman made his jaunt to the Caucasus what was more fitting than that MacGahan should accompany him and cover the trip for his paper? Was not the General a home-town boy, born in those same Ohio hills that gave birth to MacGahan?

Then Geneva claimed him for a time, to cover the Alabama Claims Arbitration Committee, followed by jaunts to whatever part of Europe seemed productive of news. Then came his opportunity—not the Balkan affair, world-important as it was to be—but one of the most daring and unusual exploits known to journalistic history.

The Russian army was marching against Khiva in Central Asia. The *Herald* wanted to know something about that distant and unknown land, just as the papers of the present day have been interested in the Riff country and Ethiopia. Russia hoped to extend her boundaries and put the Khanate of Asia under the rule of the Czar. It was an adventurous undertaking, that conquest of Khiva. Russian scouting expeditions found it next to impossible and the Russian Government absolutely forbade any newsman to go, for fear of arousing England's suspicions of an expedition headed in the general direction of India.

Newspapers abandoned the idea of sending correspondents when they were informed that the Russian Government would not permit it. But MacGahan, accompanied by two interpreters, went into a strange desert and mountainous country, chased for nine hundred miles by Cossack horsemen who were sent to bring him back. They usually reached his camping place a few hours after he had gone.

After twenty-nine days he reached the camp of General Kaufmann. Twice he was arrested in the general's territory, but partly because the rule barring correspondents was meant for the English and also because of the friendship of General Skobeleff, MacGahan was allowed to stay.

MacGAHAN tells of his accoutrements for this Khiva expedition in his own words: "Being a man of peace I went but lightly armed. A heavy double-barreled English hunting rifle, a double-barreled shotgun, an eighteen-repeater Winchester rifle, three heavy revolvers, one ordinary muzzle-loading shotgun, besides a few knives and sabers, formed a light and unpretentious outfit. Nothing was farther from my thoughts than fighting. I only encumbered myself with these things in order to be able to discuss with becoming dignity questions relating to the rights of way and of property with inhabitants of the desert whose opinions on these subjects are somewhat peculiar."

His trip to Khiva, which he recounts in *Campaigning on the Oxus*, makes the average adventure story sound like a fairy tale. Icy Siberian winds and desert sand storms swept down on him. Kirghiz tribesmen of sinister repute confronted him. He had to use one of two methods with such denizens of the deserts; either fight them or throw himself on their mercy and seek hospitality. He usually approached a tent and pushed his rifle inside first and then came in and fell on a rug before the fire and started to eat from the common pot.

No water was to be had. Sand came to the knees of the horses. At the end of the seventeenth day he reached a Russian outpost. Kaufmann had gone five days before!

Between him and Khiva and Kaufmann was the dread Turcoman. He had seen pictures of the Turcomans emptying sacks of human heads in the public square of Khiva! He nevertheless flitted away on the trail that very night, pursued by Cossacks in the rear and dodging Turcomans ahead. Often a little barley stood between him and starvation. Dead men, horses and camels marked the trail. His two Kirghiz interpreters threatened to quit on frequent occasions but he doubled and quadrupled their pay and drove them forward.

Let him tell in his own words the story of the last two days of that eventful journey:

"The sand grew deeper and deeper, and at last commenced taking the form of huge drifts, twenty and thirty feet high, which piled up in all sorts of fantastic shapes, exactly like snow-drifts. They were continually changing their form, and moving about under the action of the wind. The wind kept sifting the sand over us in little clouds, and the drifts were so steep and so high, that working our way over them was most difficult and toilsome. The horses sank nearly to their bellies; and we were obliged to dismount. Even then they only struggled through by a succession of plunges, while we ourselves sank to our knees. This continued for nearly two miles. One of those storms that so often sweep over the desert could have sent these huge drifts rolling over us, burying us twenty feet deep, leaving not a trace of us behind.

"The name of the place, Adam-Kurulgan, 'fatal to men,' was well chosen.

"I remarked that even here, impossible though it may seem, there was a little vegetation. Now and again we saw a shrub of saxual, in a more or less flourishing state. Sometimes it was almost buried, showing only a few leaves on the surface of the sand. Again, its short, scrubby stem, and immense network of long, fibrous roots, extending many yards, were completely bared to the sun, without much affecting its condition apparently, so hardy is the plant. Fortunately, this did not last long, or the horses would have been completely exhausted. As it was, we had only gone two or three miles farther, when the feeblest of the horses suddenly stumbled, staggered a moment, and then fell heavily on the sand with a groan. We threw off his saddle and bridle, distributed part of his load among the other horses, threw the rest away, and resumed the march, leaving him to die. Until long after dark we pushed forward, hoping to reach Alty-Kuduk.

"At length signs of fatigue in our horses warned me to halt and camp, if I did not wish to make the next day's march on foot. The poor beasts had to go without water that night, for it would have been impossible to carry enough with us, even had we foreseen the impossibility of getting water at Adam-Kurulgan. We offered them a feed of our hard, black, dried bread, which they were too thirsty to touch, hobbled them, and let them loose on the desert to pick up what they could find.

"I could never cease admiring my own little saddle-horse. He had now been twenty-five days in the desert; he had carried me the whole distance from Fort Perovsky, sometimes as much as sixty miles a day. More than half of the time he had nothing to eat, except what he could pick up in the desert, and yet he was by no means in bad condition. He would go the whole day, from sunrise to sunset, in the easy little trot of the Kirghiz horses, and in the evening would break into a gallop as lightly as though he were fresh from the pastures of the Syr-Darya. He was a pure-blooded Kirghiz; a light sorrel, nearly the color of the sand; head, ears, eyes, and limbs exactly like an Arab, but the neck and body shorter and heavier. It was never necessary to tether him, as he never wandered away. He swam the Amu, and proved to be as much at home in the gardens of Khiva as in the desert, never hesitating, when necessary, to take a ditch or canal. Now the poor beast was crazy for water, as were the others, and refused to touch the black bread I offered him.

"As to ourselves, we fared no better than our horse. We also were too thirsty to eat the black bread, even if our teeth had been capable of making an impression on it, without its first having been soaked in water. After the long day's ride my thirst was intolerable. The uncertainty of our situation, the ever present fear of Turcomans, who might be hovering around, the difficulty of finding the well we were in search of, the probability of missing it altogether, the condition of my horses—two more began to show signs of extreme fatigue that told me plainly enough they would not go more than another day—the possibility of being obliged to drag on to the Oxus on foot, perhaps only to fall into the hands of the Turcomans; the darkness that settled down over us like a pall—making the stillness of the desert more fear-inspiring, and even the occasional chirp of an insect startling—all combined to make this the gloomiest night I ever passed.

"After a two hours' ride next morning, our eyes caught, far away on the horizon, the glitter of bayonets in the early sunshine. Soon we made out the forms of two pickets, posted on a sandhill, watching our approach; and half an hour later we gained the little eminence from which they were keeping their dreary look-out, and beheld the camp of Alty-Kuduk, General Kaufmann's outpost. . ."

The next morning MacGahan breakfasted with the Russian staff. A *"molodyetz"* was the general's comment, meaning "brave fellow." And so he was called in Russia whenever his name was mentioned. The Russian knows no higher praise.

In the mud hut of the Grand Duke Nicholas that night he enjoyed the first tranquil sleep he had had in forty days. An officer of the Cossacks he met later told MacGahan how he had chased him across the desert but never seemed to be able to catch up with him. At the last outpost he had been told that by now MacGahan was either with Kaufmann or the hyenas and in any case out of his jurisdiction.

At Khiva, MacGahan met up with his old friend, Skobeleff, who later was to befriend him in the Balkans.

And so ended the great ride of MacGahan in Central Asia. It was so incredible that few at first believed his story, but the fact remained he had disappeared suddenly from a little fort on the Yaxaryes and reappeared as if from heaven among Kaufmann's men on the Oxus.

WITHIN three weeks of his return from Khiva, MacGahan went to Cuba to cover the Virginius affair and in March, 1874, was back in London where he wrote *Campaigning on the Oxus*. Then he sailed for Spain to cover the Carlist uprisings for his papers.

Ten months among the guerrilla warriors of that mountainous country brought many an adventure. Correspondents had to carry two different colored boinas or caps. They wore them alternately depending on where they were. MacGahan wore the Carlist colors only and as a result was often in difficulties.

Captured, he was accused of being a Carlist sympathizer and ordered put to death. Again, as in Paris, an American official intervened and his life was once more saved for his greatest work, the Balkans.

Before this, however, he was to make another expedition to quite a different land than on his previous journeys. This time on the *Pandora* expedition to the Arctic, trying for the Northwest Passage that was doomed to failure until Amundsen made it thirty-seven years later.

MacGahan wrote a book on the trip, *Under the Northern Lights*, as picturesquely as he did all his writing. Among his tales is the story of the attempt made to discover the fate of the Franklin party lost years before in the frozen North.

And now the greatest moment of his career was about to open up for him. The "Eastern Question" was worrying Europe. Bulgaria was under the yoke of the Turk, but Turkey's debt to European nations was so great that Europe was in sympathy with the Turkish program for economic reasons.

Furthermore, and still more important, England backed up the Moslem Turk against the Christian nation of Russia, not because she liked the Turk but because she feared the dominance of the great Russian nation in international affairs. Such dominance would be a menace to the security of her Indian Empire.

MacGahan was in sympathy with the under dog, as always. Having quarrelled with James Gordon Bennett of the *Herald* he went over to the London *Daily News* and was promptly sent to Constantinople to investigate the Turkish barbarities against the peasants of the Balkans who, after five hundred years of serfdom to the Turk, were now in rebellion.

MacGahan was sent to tell the world the truth and, in the telling, he remade history. His stories of the saturnalia of blood upon which the Turk was feasting astounded the world.

Without money, position or citizenship in this land he, an outsider, forced the nations of the Old World to intervene in the cause of humanity.

His stories closed the mouths of the British propagandists and bondholders, thirsty for their maturing Turkish bonds. He saw the revolting Bulgarians as similar to the minutemen of Lexington and Concord, meeting the bloody Turk with sickle, goad and fork as did the Massachusetts heroes with flintlock and club.

Disraeli, half Oriental himself, said: "There are no Turkish atrocities," and "Bulgaria must be crushed." But MacGahan went and saw and told. His account of what he saw at Batak where 12,000 peasants—men, women, and children—were burned alive in church and school and home, after promised safety, was a tale that seared the heart. It resulted in the entry of Russia into the field and the eventual defeat of the Turks in the Balkans.

MacGahan's letters to the *Daily News*, are, according to critics, among the most brilliant of their kind ever penned. They were so powerful that they gave Czar Alexander the excuse he wanted and he declared war on Turkey in the interest of civilization. MacGahan then followed as a correspondent of the war and spent many weeks in the hills and valleys of the Balkans on the heels of the Russian armies.

The hero of the war was Skobeleff and Skobeleff was MacGahan's friend, so the American was in the forefront of things as they occurred.

All through the conflict MacGahan was handicapped with a broken ankle as he followed the war maneuvers. He laughed it off by saying, "I never cared for walking much anyhow and now I have a good excuse for riding all the time."

He had hired a coachman, Isaac, and an old coach which followed him about the Danube region, often abandoned, and which caught up with him long after, the miserable Isaac wandering about, trying to find him.

MacGahan was surprised to find Bulgars and Russians being able to understand each other; not surprising, though MacGahan may not have known it, but the Bulgars were originally of the Mongol Turkish race from the highlands above Lake Baikal who came with the Mongol

hordes, settled lower Russia and then what is now Bulgaria and the Hungarian plain. When the later Kublai Khan made his almost successful conquest of Russian and mid-Europe, he too was surprised to find he could talk with the Magyars of Hungary and the Bulgars. He shouldn't have been, for they were his own breed!

MacGahan liked to sing and was always doing so. The men would say that Solomon only had a thousand and five songs, but no one could count MacGahan's.

He was often half dead from fever, but would pull himself together and face the danger of exposure with cheerfulness and gaiety.

Sick and crippled though he was, the sufferings he saw stirred his sympathetic nature and kept him going until his final illness.

His personal friendship for General Skobeleff is seen in the fact that his story of the crossing of the Danube was in the hands of the *Daily Mail* before the Russian Emperor received news of the event.

After the battle of Plevna, MacGahan rode forty-five miles through rain and fog to the Danube to send off his story. The dispatches were in his saddle bags. While looking for a place to cross the river his horse ran away carrying MacGahan's dispatches. When he reached Bucharest, MacGahan sat down and rewrote them all—the second writing of a battle story that critics agree was the most vivid account of a battle ever written!

Delayed at Bucharest by the injury to his leg which had caused him so much trouble, MacGahan was unable to travel with the advancing army but later joined it at Constantinople.

His plans to attend the Berlin Conference at which the fate of the Balkans was to be decided were in abeyance because of his illness and they were eventually cancelled by his sudden death.

Due to overwork and exposure MacGahan's health was shattered. In a badly rundown condition, he decided to recuperate on the shores of the Bosphorus. His friend, Lieutenant Greene, was stricken with typhoid and MacGahan, despite his own ill health, came in from camp to nurse him. He caught the dread typhus himself and, being weakened by his long illness, he died in convulsions in a week.

He was buried in the little cemetery of the Greeks on the hillside near Pera. Representatives of every nation followed his coffin. Masses were said for him in the church of the Little Father of the Russians in St. Petersburg, and in other cathedrals of the Empire.

SIX years later the warship *Powhatan* brought the casket containing his remains into New York harbor where in the city hall the body lay in state. A few days later, in the capitol at Columbus, Ohio, it again lay in state, and on September 11, 1884, he was buried at New Lexington, Ohio.

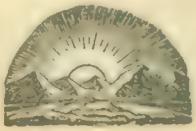
And so MacGahan came home to the hills of Perry County he had left so short a while before. In the interim, this lad, reared in adversity but overcoming all obstacles, had changed the map of empire.

On July 4, 1911, in Lexington, a monument was dedicated by the MacGahan Club and unveiled by his son, Paul, son of the Russian lady, Barbara Nicholavna d'Elaguine, whose translations of Russian classics are well known.

But MacGahan's real monument is on the map of Europe, on every Bulgarian mountain and in the heart of every Bulgarian patriot.

And should you be a traveler there, on June 12 perchance, enjoying the beauty of bright green valleys and shining lakes, the craggy hills of somber brown dotted here and there with herds of sheep and goats, with the blue high ramparts of the Balkans behind, perhaps you will take to the road afoot for awhile and climb the steep and winding dusty road which leads to the old cathedral of Tirnova, the ancient capital of Bulgaria.

And should you arrive in the morning by eleven, you will hear the deep tones of church bells rolling out across the countryside, and the peasants will hear them too, and cease their labors and bow their heads in prayer because they know that once again the hour has come when a grateful people pay a silent tribute to the saviour of their homeland, while their priests in the old cathedral say a mass for MacGahan.



Fair Weather Skipper

By STEVE HAIL

AT FIRST the big guy looked like a natural for the tin can squadron. That was before we got the look in his eyes. It was nothing you could put your finger on exactly, but . . . well, there was something about the guy.

He came aboard in the Marianas vicinity. The *Homer Spears* was lying alongside a mother ship undergoing minor repairs and waiting for replacements. A destroyer can take quite a pasting in the course of a near miss or two. Nothing too serious, but enough to lay us up for a couple of weeks.

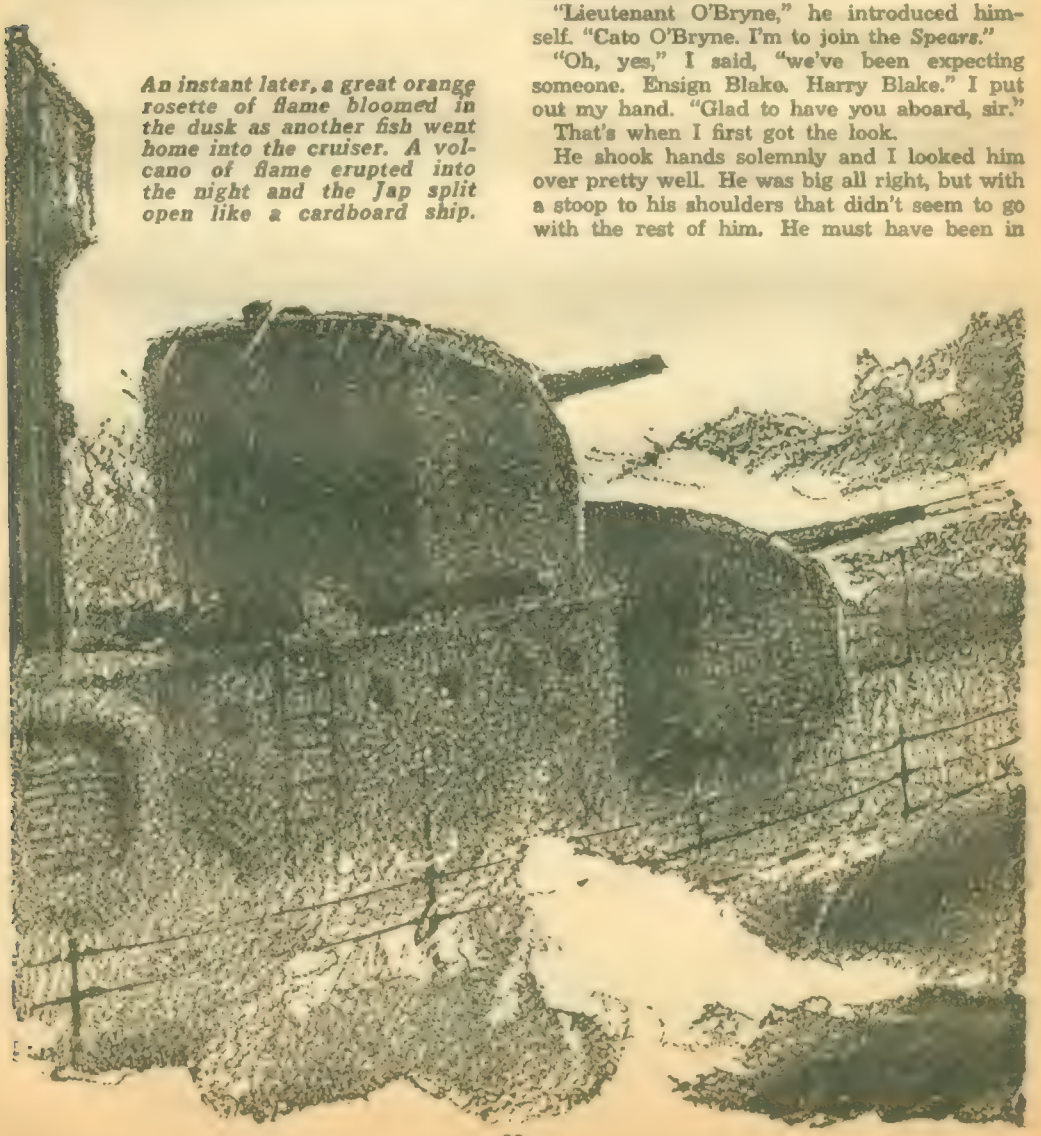
I was working in the chartroom when he came up the ladder. I glanced at the two silver bars on his grays and told myself that here was the new exec.

"Lieutenant O'Bryne," he introduced himself. "Cato O'Bryne. I'm to join the *Spears*."

"Oh, yes," I said, "we've been expecting someone. Ensign Blake. Harry Blake." I put out my hand. "Glad to have you aboard, sir."

That's when I first got the look.

He shook hands solemnly and I looked him over pretty well. He was big all right, but with a stoop to his shoulders that didn't seem to go with the rest of him. He must have been in



An instant later, a great orange rosette of flame bloomed in the dusk as another fish went home into the cruiser. A volcano of flame erupted into the night and the Jap split open like a cardboard ship.

ILLUSTRATED
BY
GORDON GRANT

his middle thirties, but there was gray showing at his temples. His skin was the color of varnished teak.

This guy, I told myself, had been around.

But it was his eyes that made you wonder. Gray, like the gray of early morning fog before the sun has broken through, and in them was, well, not fear perhaps, but a kind of bewildered look that wasn't good to see.

I wondered how the Old Man would like that look.

"The skipper's in his room," I said. "Lieutenant Commander William Oakley. He's regular."

"Thanks," the big guy said, and started for the chartroom door. He hesitated there as if there were something on his mind.

"Any idea of where we're to operate, Mr. Blake?"

"Well," I answered, "anybody's welcome to an idea. Things aren't going too well at Ormoc Bay. My guess'd be Leyte."

"Swell," he said. "I asked for Philippine duty." The muscles in his tanned face relaxed a little and tiny wrinkles showed at the corners of his eyes.

He hung around, not heading for the door, apparently thinking about something, with that funny expression on his face.

"Been on destroyers before, Lieutenant?" I asked, making conversation.

"No," he answered, coming back to life. "Transports, C-3s, and stuff like that."

I recalled the navy custom of assigning former merchant service men to transports and supply ships rather than to combat vessels.

"Oh," I said, still making polite talk, "ex-merchant marine, sir?"

He shot me a look that was like a slap between the eyes. "No," he said slowly.

I've seen men stretch the truth before. Lieutenant Cato O'Bryne was lying.

"Before the war," he went on, "I was a shoe clerk. In Chicago." He said it defiantly as if he were admitting being a procurer or something.

"O.K.," I said, for want of something better. After all, I'd managed a chain grocery before Pearl and shoe clerks were all right with me.

That ended our introduction. I heard him knock at the Old Man's door.

In the wardroom that evening, supper had been cleared away and we were relaxing over coffee and cigarettes. The meal had been none too successful from a social point of view. Lt. O'Bryne had eaten in silence, answering in clipped sentences only to direct questions. I could see the Old Man eyeing him occasionally, wondering, even as the rest of us were wondering. After all we had to live with the guy, or even die with him, from here on in.

The Old Man leaned back in his chair and lit a fresh cigarette.

"Mr. Blake tells me, Lieutenant," he opened up, "that you volunteered for the Philippines."

"That's right, sir," O'Bryne said, eyes on his coffee cup.

"Tough assignment, Leyte," the skipper prodded. "A lot easier berths in this war."

O'Bryne raised his gray eyes and they were like smoldering smoke. "I've got a score to settle," he said, "with the Japanese."

The skipper arched his black brows. "A lot of us have, Lieutenant."

"Mine's personal, sir. Of long standing." The look he shot at the Old Man said, "Shut up!" and I waited for the explosion.

BUT Lt. Commander William Oakley wasn't skipper on a hot destroyer merely because he could lay a smoke screen when and where it was needed most. His neck grew pink behind his ears, but he watched the ash from his cigarette stir in the breeze from the electric fan and changed the conversation.

I mopped the sweat from my forehead.

"Operations says it's plenty wet in the Islands," the Old Man continued pleasantly. "Down in this country a man's got to fight the weather as well as the enemy." He brushed ashes from the tablecloth with a careless hand. "I've been through here before the war," he went on, "when you couldn't see a ship length. The rain and the mist, and the steam coming off the jungle like fog, and . . ."

To my right, something hit the deck with a crash. The big guy bent over to pick up the remains of his shattered coffee cup. His hands were trembling and his face was pasty white under his tan like a man who has had a sudden dread look into the past.

He put the splintered crockery on the table, excused himself and went to his room.

"Hmm," said Healey, the engineering officer, after a while. "Ought to be interesting duty, this. Mention the weather and the second in command falls in a faint!"

The Old Man didn't seem to hear the remark. He was staring thoughtfully at the bulkhead. "O'Bryne . . . O'Brien . . . I wonder . . ." he said, half to himself. He got up and went toward the big guy's room.

But Lt. Cato O'Bryne didn't drop any coffee cups the day the Nips came over.

The *Spears* had rejoined her squadron a few days before and the little flotilla was cruising at a leisurely twelve knots off Rizal in Carigara Bay north of Leyte Island waiting for the SOCs to find out what gave.

The Old Man was below for a moment or two when the Nips streaked out of a rain squall close astern. They came in low—going hell for leather. They were on us in a flash, but Cato O'Bryne wasn't suckered. By the time the first tracers were bouncing off the bridge armor the big guy had goosed the *Spears* to full ahead and was well into a hard right turn.

The bombs missed by fifty yards.

The planes zoomed upward, circled sharply and came in for another run. Up ahead, the *Fayetteville* caught one of them at point-blank range with her 40-mms. The Jap streamed smoke, blossomed into orange flame and headed for the *Spears*.

"Hard right again, Artell," O'Bryne coolly told the quartermaster. "He'll miss us by a hundred feet."

The Old Man reached the bridge just as the Jap burned into the sea astern—a hundred feet astern.

Bombs gone, the Nips hightailed for home.

"Well done, Mr. O'Bryne," the Old Man said. "You may secure your guns."

Healey dropped into my quarters that night.

"Well," I said, rather proudly, "what'd you think of the exec?"

"He's O.K.," Healey said, "when it's clear going. I've seen guys like him before."

"Healey," I said, "you're a cynic."

Healey grunted.

But that was the way it was with the big guy. Cool as a beer on ice when the chips were down, but well . . . you were never quite sure. And he was none too pleasant to live with. In the more or less relaxed discipline of a destroyer a man lets down on the formalities a little and talks of home, and his girl and what he's going to do when the madness is over. Not the big guy. He closed up like an abalone when the talk veered away from shipside routine. And always there was that serious, odd look in his eyes when the talk was of the past.

Well, it was all right with me, even if the after dinner bull-session did fall a little flat until after he'd left the table. After all if the guy didn't want to beat his gums it was his business.

But I, for one, felt a lot better about it all after that strafing and bombing episode.

THEN the rains came.

The Philippine heavens blackened, lowered and split wide open. Water descended in torrents. Day after long day the deluge kept on. And when at last the sheets of leaden rain slackened to a drizzle, then to a mist, there was no respite. The heat of a tropical sun burning down through the overcast turned the sodden jungle to steam. The seas surrounding the Islands became a navigational nightmare with visibility at times reduced to zero.

On the *Spears*, a world bounded by a hundred yards of slimy deck and a sky no higher than the topmast truck, nerves grew raw, tempers short. The word that the doughfeet were bogged down in the Ormoc corridor and the common knowledge that the airforce was practically earthbound didn't help to ease the tension. There were reports filtering in that the Japs at Ormoc Bay were getting reinforcements by barge and transports. We knew then what our job would be. Stop the transports.

The orders, when they came through, were a boundless relief, an escape from the oppressive boredom of waiting.

It was a relief, that is, to everyone except Lt. Cato O'Bryne. Throughout the long vigil of inactivity he had grown even more introspective, if that were possible. He spoke only when spoken to and the flesh on his face had drawn tighter over his cheekbones revealing more clearly than ever that haunting doubt in his eyes.

The dawn that day crept in over Samar Island, and the vapory darkness changed to a lighter tone of gray toward the east. By noon the sky overhead and to the north had cleared, leaving only the shores of Leyte Island to the south shrouded in mist. Hearts lightened to the clean-wiped bowl of sky and footsteps were quicker about the drying decks.

It was 1700 when the attack orders came in. A lone amphibian had stabbed under the hundred-foot overcast east of Panay Island to discover an enemy convoy streaking across the Visayan Sea around the northern tip of Cebu. The *Cat* had gotten the hell out of there, but from the radioed position it was apparent the Nips had it figured to be off Ormoc jetty close after dark.

We were under way before the final orders crackled in. Our squadron, the cruisers *Las Vegas* and *Fayetteville* and four destroyers set a course for Biliran Straits, the passage between the northern tip of Leyte and Biliran Island. The *Las Vegas* held the lead position with the *Spears* tailing the formation following hard in the broad boiling wake of the third destroyer.

A messenger ran to the bridge with a new batch of reports. The Old Man read them through carefully and his mouth pressed thoughtfully. "Looks like our baby," he said, and handed the papers to O'Bryne. Over the big guy's elbow I pieced out the situation.

The heavy overcast and thick weather hanging over Leyte extended westward well beyond Cebu. The Japs were evidently counting on this cover for protection until darkness set in. With troops and supplies discharged by midnight they would depart under cover of night and run for Mindoro and their own air protection.

Another task force of ours was racing north from Sogod Bay to intercept, but it looked as if they couldn't hope to engage the convoy before nightfall. Our planes were grounded by the nearly zero ceiling and the one-mile visibility. It was a navy show and ours was all the navy within striking distance.

But it wasn't all navy just yet.

High out of the haze to the west a smudge of black midges grew rapidly larger. Over TBS

came the call to air defense. The formation scattered and the AA crews swung their guns and waited. Not long, either. The Japs had sent their fighters and fighter-bombers out to clear the way to Ormoc Bay.

Commander Oakley hooked thumbs into his belt. "Open fire," he ordered, and the 20-mms. wham-whammed into action as the first Nip peeled off. The 40s joined the chorus and the skies were suddenly black with smoke and planes as the bombers streaked down in a vertical dive.

"One down!" I recognized the voice of Cato O'Bryne and the light in his eyes was good to see. A flaming Jap plummeted toward the sea.

A black shape streaked by overhead and a second later the *Spears* rocked violently and was bathed in a fountain of flung water.

"Close!" the Old Man said. "Bring her left, Quartermaster."

Up ahead, the second destroyer in line circled crazily, her rudder blasted out of control.

"The *Hinman's* hit, sir," O'Bryne said.

The Old Man started to reply, but ducked involuntarily as another near miss plumped into the water off the bow. Machine-gun slugs began rattling off the deck-plates and I saw a Tony barreling in.

A shout went up from the crew in the starboard gun tub as the Tony shot upward momentarily, while a severed wing dropped like a fallen leaf. The Nip followed the wing and ploughed into the sea.

"Harry! Lend a hand here!" It was Lt. O'Bryne. It was the first time he'd called me by my first name. I didn't have time to wonder about that before I saw that the Old Man was down, a crumpled heap at O'Bryne's feet.

The big guy was trying to raise the skipper to his feet and there was bloody froth on his lips. Dark red splotched the gray of the shirt across his back. He was trying to talk, but no words came. His eyes were on O'Bryne, trying to convey something that he couldn't force through his throat.

"Get him below, Harry," the big guy said. "Morphine. It's through the lungs, I think."

The skipper raised a leaden hand as O'Bryne turned away.

"Don't worry, sir." O'Bryne seemed to know what the other was trying to say. "We'll get along."

The Jap planes were gone as suddenly as they had come. The reason was clear enough. From the direction of Leyte Gulf a group of Thunderbolts and Warhawks were coming down in a long slanting dive.

The order to secure came from the *Las Vegas* and the squadron resumed formation. A lowering black squall showed on the western horizon where Biliran Straits joined Carigara Bay to the Visayan Sea.

The big guy looked long at the rain and rising mist over the Straits and the high coloring of battle excitement drained from his face.

"Watch her a minute, Mr. Blake," O'Bryne said, and I could hardly hear his voice. He disappeared into the chartroom.

A minute or two later, a hoist of flags snapped at the yard on the *Las Vegas*. Over TBS came the confirmation. "Alter course forty-one degrees to starboard."

Cato O'Bryne was out of the chartroom like a cat, disbelief in his eyes.

"Come right," I told the quartermaster, watching the big guy from the corner of my eye. "Plenty thick in the Straits," I said.

"Thick," he agreed absently, and I saw his jaws relax in what seemed like sudden relief.

We steadied on the new course that would take us around Biliran Island, the prudent way in the weather that lay ahead.

The big guy walked the tiny bridge and from the almost imperceptible working of the muscles in his face I knew there was still turmoil in that troubled soul of his. He glanced every few seconds in the direction of the obscured entrance to the Straits as it bore rapidly toward the beam.

"We're taking the long way around, Mr. Blake," he said finally.

"That's right, sir. I understand it's twenty miles or more."

"Twenty-two, even if they cut the island close. They won't in what's up ahead." He drew a deep mouthful of smoke from his cigarette. "We need those miles, Harry."

I nodded agreement. If the Nips rounded Cebu before we put Giganiangan Island at the other end of the Straits abeam, our chance of interception was gone. It would be a stern chase from there on in with a good chance of missing them altogether.

The big guy had walked over to the inshore bridge wing and was staring at the beginning of the Straits. His knuckles showed white where he gripped the railing. Finally he turned and the small muscles in his jaw were knotted hard.

"Is the Old Man conscious, Mr. Blake?" he asked.

"No, sir. They put him to sleep."

The big guy nodded, took two steps across the bridge, turned suddenly back.

"Speak to the *Las Vegas* please, Mr. Blake," he said. "Ask permission for the *Spears* to break formation and run the Straits."

I looked at him, then at the blank wall of rain that masked the narrow entrance. I found myself wondering if that look in the big guy's eyes wasn't madness.

I must have been staring, because he spoke up sharply. "Did you hear me, Mr. Blake?"

"Yes, sir," I said, and promptly called the flagship.

The answer came back quickly, curt, and

almost a reprimand. "Permission denied. Hold present course, speed and position in formation."

"There it is, sir," I told O'Bryne.

He nodded silently and stole a quick glance at the shore line streaming past at thirty knots.

"Left rudder, Hynes," he said to the man at the wheel. He spoke as if he'd said, "One lump of sugar, please," and either remark would have seemed as sensible to the quartermaster. He didn't move.

"Left, I said!" O'Bryne repeated. Dry ice smoked from every syllable. "Put her down!"

Hynes put her down. The *Spears* went over like a Hellcat banking for a turn and headed for the dark blankness of the shore.

"Steady," O'Bryne said, "there'll be a rock about there. We'll leave it a shade to port."

A shout went up from the crew in the starboard gun as the severed wing dropped like a fallen leaf. The Nip followed the wing and ploughed into the sea.

"Aye, sir," Hynes said, and licked dry lips.

The rock was there all right, and so were others as the *Spears* bored into the murk. The line squall hit like a solid sheet of water and the rain was like shot flung in my eyes. I closed them for a second against the pain and when I looked again a jagged point of the island bore down on us from the starboard bow.

"Left a hair," the big guy said. And then, "Steady on, Hynes," and, "Right a bit, Hynes." His voice was a studied monotone of confidence. He tooled the two thousand tons of living steel like a canoe on a park lagoon.

I looked at him once when I dared drag my eyes away from the disaster looming ahead. There was a half smile on his drawn face and his gray eyes were case-hardened steel.

Once when the course was steadied on a gyro heading and visibility had widened to a mile he called me over to the windbreak. "Old home week, Harry," he said and pointed off to port.

The brown-rusted plates of a sunken steamer showed dimly against the shoreline.

"Freighter," O'Bryne said. "The *Absaroka*." He cleared the hoarseness from his throat. "I put her there. Five years ago." His expression darkened for a brief instant. "They told me I put her there," he went on. "I know better."

I looked at him sidewise. "Shoe clerk," I said.

The big guy grinned.

TEN minutes later he spoke over his shoulder. "Hook her on, Mr. Blake. We're clear."

I pushed the telegraphs to Flank and the *Spears* headed for Cebu with the rivets seeming to start from her plates.

It was a good hour later before O'Bryne slowed her down. The rain had slackened to a drizzle in the gathering dusk. Visibility was probably about a mile and the northern tip of Cebu lay just under the near horizon.

"Figuring their speed from what the Catalina judged," O'Bryne said, "we shouldn't have too long to wait. They're sure to pass close off the land." He wiped the rain from his face with the sleeve of his shirt. "Pass the word, Mr. Blake, to secure all doors. Stand by battle stations."

The minutes passed, seeming endless. I hadn't had time before to think much about what we had done. Now the brazen foolhardiness of the situation struck me. The wilful disobedience of orders by Cato O'Bryne could end only in disaster. The *Spears*, little and alone, outnumbered and outgunned, fighting a delaying action that. . . Something knotted hard in my stomach and I knew that it was fear.

"Enemy sighted, sir," O'Bryne's talker said in a conversational tone. I looked at the man. He was chewing gum as if he were lounging on the Pike at Long Beach. I forgot my fear.

Off to port the mist grew denser in a spot, the loom expanded and took shape. The blurred silhouette was Japanese. A cruiser. Behind her a single-stacked transport, then something else. . .

The cruiser had sighted us, only a shape in the drizzle. Recognition lights blinked a challenge.

"Hook her on, Mr. Blake," the big guy said quietly, and the *Spears* gathered way like a rearing stallion. The half darkness broke wide open into a thundering hell as the Japs opened fire. A salvo of six-inch shells from the cruiser exploded the water where the *Spears* had been a moment before.

"We're going in," O'Bryne said. He spoke to his talker. "Stand by torpedoes. We'll take the cruiser."

The next few minutes were a very long time. The night was being hammered apart. I found myself gripping the bridge railing with sweaty hands wondering how long it would be before we'd get it.

The *Spears* charged in dead on, a small fleet target in the murk. I don't remember the orders to fire torpedoes, but all at once the little vessel seemed to bend amidships as she went into a tight turn and the talker said, "Torpedoes away!"

An instant later, a great orange rosette of flame bloomed in the dusk as another fish went home into the cruiser. A volcano of flame erupted into the night and the Jap split open like a cardboard ship.

"One!" said Cato O'Bryne. "That should be a troop ship off to port. Bring her around, Hynes."

The *Spears* plunged on down, a tunnel of fire, her five-inch guns slugging the transport. The sea around us was torn with waterspouts as the defending destroyers recovered from their initial confusion and closed the range.

"That's got her," said the big guy. The transport's bow leaped high out of the water and her guns stopped firing.

The *Spears* turned on a nickel and torpedoes from a closing Jap ran under her counter.

"Close," said the big guy hoarsely, "and . . ."

The *Spears* lunged suddenly into the air, staggered, twisted and fell back as a salvo of Jap 4.7's found our forward battery. I picked myself off the deck and found the only man still standing was Hynes. His death grip on the wheel had kept him on his feet and even now he was swinging the *Spears* away from the Jap, presenting our stern to the action.

"I guess that's it," said a voice from the deck. "Call the engine room for all possible speed, Mr. Blake. And dammit, help me up."

I rushed over to help the big guy to his feet.

"Easy, Harry," he said through clenched teeth. "It's my leg. Broken, I guess. Where's that Nip?"

In the crushing impact from the blows from the Jap shells I had forgotten the pursuing destroyer. I hadn't had time to wonder why a second and succeeding salvos hadn't found the *Spears*. Now I saw.

THE sea astern of us was a holocaust of explosion and flame. The rest of the squadron racing down from the north had joined battle. I recognized the sound of the *Las Vegas'* eight-inch rifles splitting the night. The sound was good.

Now the big guy, supporting himself on one leg against the bridge rail, was getting the reports from damage control. Whitefaced, he summed up the situation.

Our guns were out of action, the decks raked clean. The bow was all but torn off, but the forward collision bulkhead was holding. A ragged hole in the starboard plates was taking water fast. By shifting liquid ballast and employing collision mats the *Spears* might float for an hour. Fire in the main magazine was under control.

"Steer 230 true, Hynes," O'Bryne said. "We'll try to beach her on Cebu."

At an agonizing ten knots we crept toward the island. Astern of us the engagement passed on to the east, occasional flashes of gunfire lighting up the overcast like Northern Lights on the far horizon.

Forty minutes later, the *Spears*, twenty degrees by the bow and her screws biting air, grounded gently on a sandy slope of beach on Cebu Island. We got the big guy, blood on his teeth-scored lips, in sick bay alongside the Old Man.

The next morning, waiting for a salvage crew from the Sogod Bay squadron, we pieced together from radio reports the final results of

the engagement. Three Jap cruisers, including the one we had blasted to hell, were known sunk. Four destroyers had been sent to the bottom and six transports of various tonnages would never feel the boots of another son of heaven on their decks.

We had lost one destroyer, exclusive of the *Spears* and the previously damaged *Hinmam*. The *Fayetteville* had taken a mauling, but would fight again before too long.

In the sick bay, Commander Oakley, returned to consciousness, read the reports and listened to Cato O'Bryne's account of the action.

"That," the big guy finished, "is the score for the squadron."

He drew deeply on a cigarette and stared thoughtfully at the overhead with narrowed eyes. "The score for one Lt. C. O'Bryne," he said, "over a five-year period is two commands, twice beached." His voice was sober, but the bitterness was gone. After a moment he said softly, "Come hell, high water or court-martial I figure I've settled a score."

The Old Man, lying motionless, spoke with difficulty. "Maybe," he said, his voice a barely audible whisper, "you'll tell us now about the first one. The *Absaroka*."

O'Bryne shrugged. "There's nothing to tell, sir," he said. "It all came out at the hearing in Honolulu five years ago. Like I told you when I came aboard."

He was silent for a while, then he started talking in a slow, quiet voice. "The Japanese were pirates even then," he said. "The light and fog signal on Biliran Island had been moved a full mile inland. That's why the *Absaroka* went ashore. Along with several others in the Philippine area. The Japs needed scrap, bad."

He lit another cigarette and went on. "Remember the *President Hoover*," he asked, "in the China Sea?" He shrugged. "Well, they wouldn't believe me. They couldn't, they said, accuse a foreign nation of piracy. Carelessness they called it and suspended my license for a year.

"Have you ever lost a ship, gentlemen?" Nobody said anything, and the big guy went on. "It does something to you. After the year was up I tried sailing coastwise for a while. It was no good. Whenever the fog set in all I could think of was a misty night in Biliran Straits when the *Absaroka* struck. I began to doubt myself."

He flicked the ashes from his cigarette, and glanced at me. "I took a job selling shoes—in Chicago. There's no room for a 'fair weather skipper' any more."

There was a long silence in the sick bay. Outside the long swells of the Visayan Sea rolling in from the northeast in the direction of Biliran Straits slapped persistently against the torn steel sides of the *Spears*.

The Old Man's laboring voice broke the quiet. "I think they'll believe you now, Lieutenant," he said.

The big guy's voice was tinged with bitterness again. "Believe me?" he said. "Hell, I'll get a court-martial for this."

"Or the D.S.M.," the Old Man said softly.

TWO months later I was working in the chartroom on the *Spears* at Pearl Harbor. The new bow section was nearly completed and another week would see us back in commission. I found myself wondering about past events.

The Old Man, I knew, had been sent to the coast for hospitalization and re-assignment to a new command. Cato O'Bryne, I had heard, was still in Honolulu. He had been given both the court-martial and the Distinguished Service Medal. I had lost track of him after that.

Footsteps coming up the bridge ladder interrupted my thoughts. A big guy with the gold leaf of a lieutenant commander on the collar of his grays came through the door.

"Lieutenant Commander O'Bryne," he introduced himself. "Cato O'Bryne. I'm to take over the *Spears*." He grinned and stuck out his big hand. "How are you, Harry?"

I shook hands. "Glad to have you aboard, sir," I said, and my eyes misted a little as I looked him over.

He was big all right, with straight shoulders and something in his eyes that I recognized as the unmistakable look of command. The big guy was a natural for the tin can squadron.

THE HARD WAY

By BURT SIMS

They were at the train, and zipping over it as his words went into the microphone contained in his oxygen mask. "Flak on those flat-cars!"

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN MEOLA

TWICE, over the Channel, he thought he would have to leave it. The control column had set up a tortured vibrating, like a wounded animal beating its tail against the ground, and the left wing showed a lethal reluctance to remain level.

Something intangible held him in the cockpit. *Do I climb out?* . . . Hell, no! He didn't waste time analyzing the reason. He just hunched forward, his tired left arm jockeying throttle and RPM control, his right arm and both feet struggling to hold the Mustang headed for home.

Like a reprieve, the long, indented shadow of

England humped out of the sea. The blue lace of the Thames estuary gave him a check point and he bore slightly to the left and found Manston's long runway ribboning before him.

Now would be the time to breathe easier, to let some of the tension drain from his mind and muscles. He had fought long enough. Now was the time to adopt the sane approach; take it the easy way. He should maintain his speed, set the crippled plane down on its wheels and then let the tail reach for the cement. They call that a wheel landing, and it isn't as clean and painstaking as a three-point landing, but it's the easiest and safest way to land an airplane whose capabilities are in doubt.

But the thought of making a wheel landing occurred to him only remotely, and he let it fade. He liked things hard and clean. He could fight a little longer. The plane teetered, almost stalling, as he moved up the approach leg of his landing pattern. His hands and feet moved swiftly and surely as the Mustang reached for earth with the reluctance of a dainty woman forced to handle a dirty rag. Now the plane

was settling heavily in a three-point attitude. Suddenly the lifting power of the amputated left wing collapsed, like a hydraulic jack. He cut the switches hastily as he felt that left wing hit, then was pitched hard against the Sutton harness which held him in his seat.

In that flicker of time he felt a swarming of fear; then there was nothing to do except ride it out. The plane's undercarriage snapped, and it slewed crazily across the runway on its belly, spilling gasoline and coolant like blood from its wounds.

MAJOR Rouge tapped a cigarette against the pack. His eyes were hard. "Beaver," he said. He made it sound like an epithet. "Eager beaver."

Smoky Curtiss let his parachute slide to the floor of Squadron Operations. Outside, the truck he had ridden for three hours rolled away through the fading afternoon sunlight. In him was an infinite weariness, now abruptly flogged by anger. He had never had reason to like Rouge. He acknowledged the major's ability as a pilot. But that was the result of good training. There are many good pilots. It was more a clash of temperaments than anything else. Rouge had been here a long time, as combat pilots count time. Now he was the squadron operations officer, second in command. Some day, if Marshall went home or went down, Rouge would get the squadron. That's the dynasty of the Air Force.

"It was a convoy—a few miles west of Belfort. Is the war over, or don't we still shoot at the enemy?"

Rouge leaned against the table that served as his desk. He was lean and dark, with straight, firmly-set shoulders. He enjoyed being very military when he thought the occasion timely. "There might have been easier ways," he retorted. "Peeling a wing-tip off on a church and then piling up a seventy-five-thousand-dollar airplane isn't smart. Personally, Curtiss, I like smart pilots in this outfit. You've been around. You should know better than that."

"You make it sound as if I did it on purpose."

"Maybe you don't know it, but you did." He lit the cigarette, and went on witheringly. "From what you said on the phone, you did a lot of good. You got a truck."

Smoky nodded, his mouth set grimly. "I got a truck. Burning."

"Good trade. One airplane—one truck." Rouge shook his head impatiently. "Don't you ever figure the odds? Can't you add things up? Don't bust your tail for peanuts! Make it pay!"

"It stopped the convoy," Smoky maintained stubbornly, knowing his argument was futile. He really hadn't done much good. There had been time for only one brief shot before he tried to slip between the church and the building next to it. It was a hard target, but he had figured he shouldn't let that convoy go unscathed. The truck had exploded, had sent flowers of flame dancing across the dusty road, and the two trucks behind it had careened into a ditch. "They need trucks," he said wearily.

"We need airplanes, too," Rouge snapped. "Unfortunately, we also happen to need pilots, or I'd let you sit on the ground for a month. In case you haven't discovered it, the whole Eighth Air Force is trying to keep the Jerries from getting men and supplies to the front. I can't penalize the rest of the outfit by taking you off flying duty."

Smoky eyed him coolly, but he could feel the anger beating up through his neck and into his head. Perhaps he had been wrong in trying to make a landing the hard way with a damaged plane. But he had nursed that plane home; he had brought it all the way in when he had every right and privilege to climb out of it somewhere over the Channel and hope for Air-Sea Rescue. He felt he had earned the right to try to determine that plane's destiny without challenge.

"Marshall has gone to the flak home for ten days," Rouge was saying. "When he gets back he may have something to say about this. I'm not going to bother him with a phone call—he needs the rest." He walked to the window.

Smoky said, "Is that all?"

"No." Rouge waited a long moment before he turned. His words were clipped; very military. "In my estimation, you have not shown the qualities of leadership which a flight leader should have. You are reckless. You do not think. You—"

Smoky tried to keep the shocked anger out of his voice. "I *was* thinking. This, what we're doing—what the hell, you have to take chances."

"Chances? Sure. But nine times out of ten, Curtiss, there are two ways to take chances. The easy way, and the hard way. You seem to delight in taking the hard way, without fail. It's stupid."

"Just a sec—"

"Hard way, hard way," Rouge intoned. "Do you know why I finally got to be operations officer of this squadron? Because I found out you'll last a lot longer the easier way."

Smoky's eyes were hot. "Maybe you aren't as eager as I am, Rouge," he said with brutal significance. "Maybe you don't care enough. Maybe that's all there is to it. Maybe that's why you think I'm reckless. But ask the guys in my flight what *they* think! Ask—"

"I'm not asking anybody anything." Rouge's voice was hard. "And although we don't stand much on rank around here, just watch it a little. Just watch it, Lieutenant."

Smoky's fingernails bit into his palms. Like

snapping steel, he said respectfully, Yes, sir."

"From now on, until Marshall gets back, I'll lead your flight."

"You'll what! You can't do that. You just said we were short of pilots. You'll need me!"

"You'll still fly. You'll fly my wing."

Smoky's eyes narrowed. "You don't mean that, Major. Fly Number Two in my own flight?" That position was for new men; flying the flights leader's wing, being taught what to do and when to do it.

Rouge ground out the cigarette with his heel. "Number Two," he snapped.

IT WAS all temporary. You could fight the thought, but gain nothing. The way they lived now made the world—and the things and the loves in it—very impermanent. The only consolation that made sense, sometimes, was that at least everything was permanently temporary.

Major Rouge's voice was hard. "Although we don't stand much on rank around here, just watch it a little. Just watch it, Lieutenant."

Like Suzanne.

She was waiting on the far corner of the square when he climbed out of the liberty run truck. He threaded his way through the bicycle traffic and took her arm. "Let's get a drink."

She looked at his face, said, "It was rough today."

She had a faint French accent, and much more. He had always had the vague idea that all French girls were dark and vivacious—he always thought of old pictures he had seen of Fifi D'Orsay—until he met Suzanne. She was honey blond, with fair complexion. Her eyes were blue and calm. Her lips were fresh and generously-formed and her body was slim and well-proportioned. He once had said, "Body by Fisher," and had grinned at her modesty.

He nodded shortly. "You might even call it rugged."

They walked along the narrow street, through the dusk. The gray, aged buildings seemed to increase the restlessness gnawing at him.

"You're walking fast," she said. "Are you very, very thirsty?"

He slowed his pace as they turned into a shadowy archway toward the Red Lion. He stopped and took her shoulders. "It's poor timing, maybe. But I need this." He kissed her once, gently, and then when her arms slipped around his neck he kissed her again, not so gently. "You're good for me, Suzanne."

She cast a sideways glance at his tanned, boyish face; a young face with eyes fast growing old. "Yes," she said, then paused. "Only,

sometimes, I am not so sure that you are. . ."

"That I'm what?"

"Good for *me*," she said, making a little face at him.

"I try hard," he said. The words sounded very familiar, only twisted around a little. Well, he was twisted around, too, and he didn't care to think about it any further. He squeezed her arm, and they walked on.

The evening got up off its knees and began to run smoothly, without effort. This was living. The restlessness went back somewhere inside of him and sat down. He began to feel the drinks a trifle, but not too much. You couldn't get that much to drink. Not when he liquor is rationed and the place is crowded. But being with Suzanne helped. Never before had it seemed to help so much. But, then, never before had he needed her so much.

It was good, needing her and having her there. The music stopped and he led her through the door and downstairs again. He found a table with five empty beer bottles on it. He carried them to the bar, and returned with two glasses. "Beer," he said. He mimicked the barmaid. "No more spirits."

Suzanne smiled. "You feel better now."

He laughed. "You sound as though I were one of your patients."

"You are."

"Are you busy at the hospital?"

She nodded slowly, a shadow coming into her eyes. "So many people are hurt."

He took her hand. "Maybe not too much longer, honey."

"Perhaps." To her face came a regretfully wise, almost resigned, look that he had seen on others who had witnessed great suffering, and who fully expected to witness more. "And when it's over, many people will be hurt again."

"How?"

She looked at him strangely, then quickly touched her glass to his. She said, "Cheers. To anything."

He didn't get it. He wanted to. He tried, and just as he thought he was about to, and beginning to feel odd and happy and crazy, someone with a friendly voice said, "Well, good evening!"

HE LOOKED up and it was Rouge, standing there confidently, with that superior look in his eyes. "How are you, Curtiss?"

"O.K.," he answered, and seeing the way Rouge was looking at Suzanne, he knew why the major's voice had held such a friendly tone. She returned Rouge's smile politely.

"Major Rouge," said Smoky, remembering martial etiquette, "this is Miss Roche." He had to say it, but he didn't have to make it sound welcome, and he didn't.

"Roshay?" inquired Rouge, giving it the French pronunciation. "*Francaise?*"

She nodded. "*Oui.*"

He took the chair between them, easily, as though he were an old friend. He said to Smoky, "She's French."

"Imagine that."

"Yeah," said Rouge. "I'm French, too. My father was." He turned to Suzanne, and spoke in French. She answered in the same tongue. He said something else and she turned questioning eyes toward Smoky before replying, in English, "I'm with Lieutenant Curtiss."

Rouge smiled, but it did not reach his eyes. "Just asked her whom she's with," he explained. "Trying my French. You know."

"Yeah. I know."

Suzanne said politely, "You fly together?"

Rouge's eyes were wicked. He waited for Smoky to answer. Smoky said flatly, "The major is the operations officer of my squadron."

Rouge said, "We fly together, all right." He laid a ten-shilling note on the table. "Tell you what, Curtiss. I'll buy—you go after 'em." He went on quickly to Suzanne, "An old American custom."

When Smoky got back to the table Suzanne was laughing and Rouge was again speaking in French, his hand over hers. She withdrew it as Smoky set the glasses down, and he had no way of knowing that Rouge had only that moment made the move. The evening suddenly went down on its knees again, and he felt old and tired.

Smoky said, his voice hard, "Excuse me, please," and made his way to the washroom. A bomber navigator, full of respectful love for all fighter pilots, offered what was left of a quart of White Horse.

The straight whiskey fell heavily onto the beer he had already consumed and took advantage of the weariness which had been in his mind and body since early afternoon. It seemed that was the way he wanted it. It didn't take long.

He was weaving slightly as he arrived back at the table. Suzanne gazed at him with troubled eyes. Rouge seemed to be enjoying himself. "We were waiting for you," he said. "Thought you went on furlough."

Smoky ignored him. "Suzanne."

"Yes?"

"Let's dance. Let's you an' me dance."

She and Rouge arose at the same time. She touched Smoky's sleeve. "I—I promised the major the next one. If he doesn't mind. . ."

"We've been waiting for you," Rouge said again, accusingly.

"He was—rather insistent," she said, her eyes trying to tell him more, and above that, wondering at him.

"Who wouldn't be?" Rouge tried to make it humorous. He took her arm. "See you upstairs," he told Smoky.

"Hell, no!"

Suzanne said, "Smoky."

He wagged his head, but stopped suddenly as the room began to shift. "Boy," he complained. "Hell, no!"

She was bewildered. "But, Smoky—your friend. . ."

"Take it easy," Rouge told him warily, not sure.

"Take it easy, take it easy," he repeated thickly. "Always take it easy, aren't you? You know what? . . . You're gonna tell me I'm stupid, aren't you? That I'm stupid—Well, who's afraid of the big, bad Rouge?" He sighed. He wagged his head once more. "Yep. Stupid."

"That's about enough," Rouge said grimly.

"Smoky," Suzanne said, "please. It's almost time for you to go."

He opened his mouth. He wanted to think of something and, like before, it was coming but it didn't come right way. The room was tipping slightly at the far end, trying to tip without him noticing it. He closed his mouth and stared hard at the far end of the room, forcing it, making it go level again. Then he looked at her, and Rouge was standing beside her, with his hand on her arm and there was a tiny catch in his throat suddenly. The first thought never did get there, but a second one did. Rouge in—Curtiss out. . . Smoky said, "It's past time." Then very gravely, "It's past time for me to go. Here I go. All the way out. *Zip!*"

She started toward him as he turned, but Rouge held her arm and said, "Let him go. He'll make it." By that time Smoky had left them and was staring hard to make the far end of the room go level as he approached it. All the while he was making his feet walk he could hear something inside his head saying, *Stupid . . . stupid . . . stupid.* He shook his head violently once to stop it, but that was no good and by the time he reached the door he was nodding. The something inside his head said, *Yes . . . Now you see. But you sure found out the hard way, boy. You sure did. . .*

IT WAS a good formation, tight and tucked in neatly, with no ragged edges to tempt a sun-hidden Hun. Smoky could find no fault with it as his seeking eyes swung in a half-circle encompassing the major's Mustang. Rouge was in the lead position, to Smoky's right and slightly ahead. Now and then he could see Rouge's head turn toward him, and he knew the major was just as carefully sweeping the blue backdrop against which Smoky's plane moved.

The squadron was in battle formation, well spread. There were four flights, each composed of four planes. Within themselves, each flight flew almost line abreast, so that every man could watch above and behind the man beside him. Like two sets of twins, element leaders and wingmen protected each other.

Beyond, to the right of the major and slightly behind him, flew Keaton, leading the second element. And to Keaton's right and slightly behind him, was Bruger the Number Four Man.

Well, Rouge knew how to fly and he knew how to keep his eyes open. But there were some things he didn't know. He didn't know how it felt to fly Number Two in your own flight. He didn't know how it felt to have another man take away your pride and give you your own bitter heart as an appetizer. He didn't know how it was to remember all the things about Suzanne and, remembering her, also remember how it had looked with Rouge talking with her and laughing with her and taking her arm. . .

Smoky had never seen another man with Suzanne before, and the thought now struck him suddenly that he never wanted to again. He looked at the sky and the planes and the earth, and it seemed very ironic; this was certainly a hell of a place to find out he was in love.

The squadron swung southward, skirting the smoke-hazed Ruhr Valley and the dirty, clawing steel of its guns. They saw the sprawling patch of forest in the distance, and then the dive started. They reached the forest, leveled off at two hundred feet and the trees slipped under the wings in a green blur. Here the squadron split, each of the four flights swinging away in its appointed direction.

Patroling the blue vault somewhere above was another squadron, covering the operation.

Rouge led them, hedge-hopping toward the rail junction which had been selected as their starting point. They were to fly the iron beam, moving along a railroad which stretched northeastward toward Berlin Ground-strafing. . . Low-level work . . . Down on the deck. . . You moved fast and dangerously. You were the target of innumerable guns which you often could not see. One miscue, one wrong twist of a wrist, and there was no cushioning altitude in which to recover your fumble.

Smoky saw the gray plume of steam which trailed from the locomotive just as Rouge said, "Cutter Leader, here. Ninety degrees to port." The major's Mustang curved smoothly to the left, away from the railroad. Smoky swung with him, as did Keaton and Bruger. A moment later they turned a hundred and eighty degrees to this course and approached the train from its right flank, like a football end judging a forward pass. That took good timing.

They were cleaving the air at better than 350 miles an hour, now not more than fifty feet above the ground. Their shadows sped over terrain that was flat, with a few dingy farm-

houses lifted like islands in a sea of brown fields.

It looked like just another freight train—until Smoky noticed four flat-cars interspersed with the small box-cars. The Mustangs were rushing now with intense speed, sweeping just above the ground like four desperate racers charging neck and neck toward a finish line. Wisps of smoke whipped back from Rouge's wing. A spray of dust leaped up ahead of the locomotive, and then the bullets began eating into the locomotive itself. It was good shooting. Smoky was shooting, too, by then, walking his rudder pedals a little so the pattern would be widely spread.

But even as he shot, and as his eyes noticed the flat-cars, his left thumb pushed the radio transmitter button on his throttle. There was no time to do anything except tell them, if they hadn't already seen. They were at the train, on it and zipping over it as his words went into the microphone contained in his oxygen mask. "Flak on those flat-cars!"

As though to bear out his warning, a smoking stream of tracers stretched out in a thin, scalding line ahead of his right wing-tip. He cut sharply left, and kicked top rudder. He heard a quick drum-beat. The plane nosed skyward abruptly, and he eased off into a shallow, climbing turn, looking for Rouge and the others.

It was difficult to pick out low-flying planes against the mottled carpet of earth. He was about to give them a call when Rouge's voice came into his earphones. "Hello, Cutter Red Two . . . Hello, Cutter Red Two . . . This is Cutter Leader . . . Over."

"Cutter Red Two, here," Smoky recited, his left thumb holding in the transmitter button. "Over to you, Cutter Leader."

There was silence for a moment. Then, with a slight tinge of exasperation, came, "Hello, Cutter Red Two . . . Cutter Red Two . . . Cutter Leader, here."

Smoky tried again, but he already felt the doubt. "Cutter Red Two, here," he answered. "Go ahead, Cutter Leader."

There was another silence. "Cutter Red Three," said Rouge's voice. "Did you hear anything from Curtiss?"

"Not a whistle," Keaton said.

SMOKY, who now could receive but could not send, swore with annoyance. Well, that took care of that. He knew what the quick drum-beat had been. He had heard bullets slap a fuselage before this. The German gunners had damaged his radio transmitter.

He circled once more at three thousand feet, hoping they might return to the train. He could see it plainly, a few miles to the south, steam spouting from its ruptured boilers.

Odd that the Germans should attach four flak-carrying cars to an ordinary freight string. Of course, they might have expected just such an attack. But if you looked at the odds—he suddenly thought of Rouge—they probably had something in those box-cars which they liked very much. It was almost a cinch that those box-cars weren't empty.

He scanned the sky once more, looking for planes, friendly or otherwise. Except for a few cottony patches of low cumulus cloud, it was an empty, quiet bowl. He gazed down at the train again. Those German gunners were good. They had hit him from a difficult angle. It made him uncomfortable, thinking about those guns. He thought about the box-cars. He wasn't doing anyone any good, stooging around up here. That flak was rough. It was very rough. But. . .

On the ground, the gray-uniformed men who had been arguing with the frightened engineer, heard the rising snarl of the Mustang engine. They broke apart hastily, and threw themselves into a ditch as the guns erupted with the sound of taut, tearing canvas.

The lead slammed into the wooden cars, splintering their sides, tearing into their cargo, and suddenly one and then its neighbor burst like a swollen paper bag, heaving torn timbers high into the air.

The concussion slapped the Mustang hard over on its back, and in that instant Smoky's scared eyes were looking into a boiling mass of black and white and brown, tendrils and clots, impenetrable. In the next instant the brown earth was above his head in a blur, and only a few feet away. Somehow, miraculously, he was able to push the stick forward, bringing the nose up in this inverted position. The plane was shaking and yawning on its back. A moment later, with more air space beneath him, he was able to right it.

Cautiously, his face dripping perspiration and his stomach in a cramping knot of after-fright, he climbed and banked slightly. He looked back at the train. The locomotive lay on its side. Behind it stretched a black, smouldering lane of wreckage. Very small pieces. Orange clusters of flame winked at him through the smoke. There was no sign of life.

His head swung from left to right, and back again, the shock still alive in his eyes. This was no time to be jumped. He had no idea of how much damage his Mustang had suffered. It flew sluggishly, and without confidence. The engine was pounding, and he could see bad rips in both wings.

His eyes narrowed suddenly at a glint in the distant sky, and then he opened them wide and tried to see beyond the glint, which is the way to look for something in the air. His shoulders twitched, startled, as he heard the calm voice in his ears, "Cutter Leader, here. Let's take a look at this guy."

Then he heard Keaton's voice, filled with amazement. "Holy Toledo! Was that our train?"

The glint grew nearer and became an airplane, then three airplanes. They were bearing down at him from behind and above. It could be Rouge and the others. It should be. But Mustangs and Messerschmitt 109s look very similar from some angles, and he couldn't take the chance. He advanced the throttle as far as he could. He drew it back hopelessly until the tortured lunging of the engine slackened. His eyes bore back at the approaching planes. He did not realize how his muscles had tightened until he heard Rouge say, "It's a Mustang," and the three planes swung out to one side and he could definitely identify their silhouettes. He blew out a breath and relaxed.

Rouge said, "Smoky, damn you! Did you take another crack at that train?"

He moved the stick to and fro a few times, and the plane's nose bobbed.

"His transmitter must be out," said Keaton. "But he can receive."

"Smoky," Rouge said, "that was a terrific job. That thing must have been loaded with all the ammunition in Germany."

He read something in Rouge's voice, and grinned, feeling the oxygen mask tighten on his face. Rouge said, "We'll take it easy, going out. Your ship looks like a hunk of Swiss cheese." He paused. Then, so that every man in the squadron, so that every radio in the squadron, would hear, Rouge said, "Hello, Cutter Red Two. . . This is Cutter Leader. . . Take charge of your flight, Smoky."

They made it home, and he went in fairly fast and made a very smooth wheel landing. A wheel landing, because a guy can learn—even the hard way.

Rouge caught up with him and took his arm as they approached the Intelligence officer waiting outside of Squadron Operations. "Hold it a second."

Smoky kept a noncommittal expression. "Yeah?"

"Two things," Rouge said. "Yesterday—and today. I've lasted a long time because none of my mistakes was permanent. Know what I mean?"

"I think so."

"I've already called it a mistake. I guess that's an apology, isn't it?"

"If you want it to be. Sure."

"Yeah, I want it to be. You aren't always right. But, then, neither am I."

In all of this Smoky heard the things Rouge couldn't say, being Rouge. He offered him a cigarette, and said, "We hit a pretty good average."

There was one more thing, which waited until they climbed into the truck to go to the messhall. Rouge inquired carefully, "Going to town tonight, Smoky?"

He smiled. "Well, yes, I guess so." He paused. "You?"

Rouge yawned elaborately. "No, not this guy. There's nothing there for me. Got another cigarette?"

ONE IN A THOUSAND

By
GIFF CHESHIRE

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

The barge shot straight out, leaving the water for an interminable time. Sandesty prayed briefly as he awaited the outcome . . .

THE *Chas. H. Tucker* answered Steve Sandesty's air whistle blast with a kick of the propellers that sent the big Diesel tug out of the lock chamber in a frisky lunge. The bow of the steel gasoline barge, snubbed ahead of the *Tucker,* cleared the big pylons at the canal entrance only by inches.

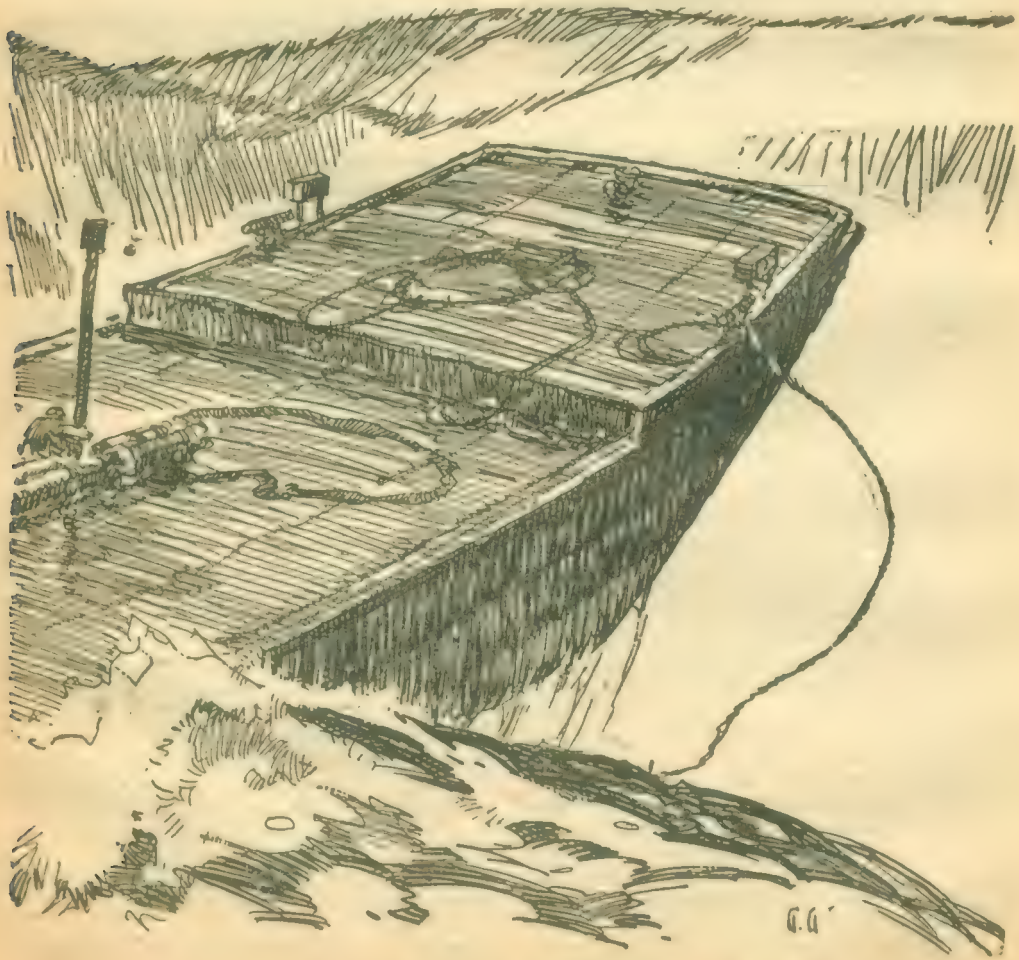
Sandesty stomped out the door of the control tower at the upper gates. "Cut out them blasted monkeyshines!" he roared through cupped palms.

That his words were not completely lost in the snarfling of the powerful motors was indicated by the extra speed with which Arnie Haines, the tug master, answered him, then the show-off way he kicked the Diesels into reverse, bringing the tandem-coupled rig to a stop in a churn of water, up by the guide wall.

Anger prodding him, Sandesty stalked along the chamber lip. Maybe he *was* only one of the lock crew on the big government canal here at Silverthorn, lacking even the chief lockmaster's dignity and authority, but no fresh young pup of a tug master was going to get away with that kind of stuff on his watch.

"By damn, Mister!" he shouted at Arnie Haines, who had come out on the bridge. "You're going to crowd me into reporting you! How many times have I warned you about speeding? You want the super to write your company a letter about it?"

Arnie Haines was a tall, muscular young fellow. His face, boyish and good-natured, was weathered a saddle-brown. He was a slick Diesel man, but handicapped by the fact that he knew it. Had to show off his command over the gigantic piece of equipment under his hand. Had to garnish the derring-do reputation he had



. . . Then they hit water again in three pounding and skipping impacts that told him they had overshot the boil at the foot of the falls.

built along the river and especially with his own crew. Prideful in his dominance over the tremendous power at his fingertips, Haines swerved his attention to Sandesty, grinned and lifted his thumb to his nose. Yet it was more a teasing gesture than deliberate insult.

For an instant, fighting instinct crowded Sandesty, then he slowly regained his self-control. Haines knew he wouldn't have the heart to report him, getting him barred from the canal and maybe jeopardizing his job and license. Not when Sandesty was a retired river man himself. Not when there was Pete to think about, Sandesty's son, who was a deckhand in Haines' crew.

"I mean it, Arnie!" Sandesty tried again, making his voice more reasonable. "Maybe there ain't a chance in a thousand that anything'll go wrong. But someday everything might not click just like you figure. Someday, if you keep pulling the devil's whiskers, he's going to get you on that thousandth chance!"

"I wouldn't worry about me, Sandesty!" Haines called back. "I haven't chipped any paint off your lock chamber, yet, have I? I swear, a man'd think you put in the Silverthorn Canal outta your own pocket, the way you worry! And if you know so much about running a boat how come you ain't still at it?"

His manner clearly demonstrated the opinion now so prevalent on the river. The old-timers, with their awkward and puny steam packets, hadn't been real river men. There hadn't been any real river breed, their ways seemed to say, until the big Diesel tugs and the push lighters and the huge self-propelled barges showed up on the Tumalum. Yet this Arnie Haines, the worst of the lot, probably couldn't remember what a steamboat looked like.

Sandesty clamped his jaws tight. The smart-alec was bent on defying the lightning. Sandesty just didn't want it to strike in his locks, didn't want it to involve his own boy. He lifted his thin shoulders in a shrug and went back into the control house.

The Silverthorn Canal had been the government's answer to the big falls that disrupted an otherwise hundred-mile stretch of good, navigable river. Two lock chambers compensated for the difference in elevation, the one here at the upper entrance and another at the lower end, just below the forty-foot falls, three and a half miles down.

The stretch of river this system by-passed was rock-split into half a dozen narrow, swift surging channels, all of which climaxed in tremendous uproar and violence down at the falls. This tumult was at its peak now, for the Tumalum was in spring flood, burdened with the run-off of a far-flung drainage basin.

The Tumalum penetrated a vast rich empire of rolling plains heavily broken by earth fissures and gigantic rock croppings. Wheat grew on its gentler slants as nowhere else in the West, and cattle waxed sleek in its grotesque badlands. The Tumalum and its heavy traffic was the backbone of the basin, and all that traffic had to be threaded through Silverthorn Canal.

SANDESTY let his gaze travel slowly along the yellow-washed distant rim. When a man has grown up with a thing so vast and replete as this he can't help feeling he has a personal stake in it, that it belongs in part to him and he in part to it. These young pups couldn't understand. They assumed that it had always been thus, discounting or ignoring the men whose sweat and courage and cunning had brought it into being.

Haines' question as to why Sandesty wasn't still on the river galled the lock tender. He touched a palm unconsciously to his stiff spine. Haines had been on the Tumalum only four or five years. He probably didn't realize that had been a pretty cheap dig.

Long years before, Steve Sandesty had been a packet master. And a crackerjack, like Arnie Haines. He had started in steam, in the days when the big stern and side-wheelers had plied the river, portaging here at Silverthorn Falls. He had seen steam giving way to gasoline. He had seen the canal put in. Then, before Diesels became commonplace, he had quit the river.

There weren't many men left who knew just why, and most of those had probably forgotten. Sandesty hadn't forgotten it, because of the daily reminder that clumsied his movements and the pain that occasionally still surged along his crippled backbone. His own thousandth chance had come up with a bang.

Steve Sandesty had been as big a smart-alec, in his time, as Arnie Haines was now—maybe bigger. He had taken dam' fool chances for the sheer love of risk. And he had learned caution too late.

Where he might have fired a deckhand for the same offense, he had stood one day too close to a steel line on which a steam winch was pulling. Something had snapped and a length of cable had wrapped around Sandesty. When he went back to work again, it was as a lockman. He was permanently crippled.

Young Pete Sandesty, who had been born long after Sandesty came ashore, knew about that, but he evidently hadn't told Arnie Haines. Sandesty had been pleased when Pete wanted to go on the river, but worried, too, when the boy hired out to the line owning the *Tucker* and got himself assigned to Haines' command. Steve also knew Pete was annoyed by the constant bickering between his father and the river jacks.

Sandesty's fussiness and continual haranguing on caution nettled the strong-bodied, high-spirited river men, and it had got to be a joke on the Tumalum. The *Tucker* was not the only

outfit that liked to cut capers for the express purpose of making Sandesty sore. Sandesty rarely locked a rig thorugh any more without having to clench his teeth, knowing that the oftener he blew his cork the more they were going to badger him. For Pete's sake, he had made a special effort to keep his trap shut when Arnie Haines prodded him.

And there was something stemming out of sheer father instinct that pressed heavily on Sandesty. The boy was making something of an idol of Arnie Haines, imitating his cocky swagger and devil-may-care bravado. Though he tried to keep it from his parent, Sandesty knew the lad was also sampling the dubious pleasures Haines was addicted to in the saloons and dance halls down in Plattsburgh. Once Sandesty had controlled the boy, but now he could read in Pete's eyes that the kid was putting his old man down as a killjoy and crank. Pete had got away from him.

The *Tucker* had stopped four hundred feet above the entrance, and Pete and another deckhand, a lad named Chuck Fitzgow, were snubbing the barge to the guide wall. The big steel hull, loaded with high-test gasoline, looked like a giant knife blade, so closely did it hug the water.

Sandesty frowned. This meant the *Tucker* was going to lock back down to the lower river to pick up a second barge, then proceed upward with a double header. This was another newfangled practice that Sandesty did not like. No matter how powerful her Diesels, the tug would have a job handling two loaded barges in the upper river, now that it was in flood.

The lockman had left the outer gates open, and as soon as she was free of the barge, the *Tucker* left the two deckhands to finish securing it and backed down into the chamber. Sandesty slid the control lever and watched the gates swing shut in their usual ponderous gentleness. When they were sealed, he opened the big valves that would empty the chamber.

He moved to the lip to make certain Haines wasn't crowding the lower gates, as was his habit, while the big tug settled with the lowering water. Anything to save time, that was Arnie Haines; anything to put a rig upriver at Jinker's Landing faster than the other fellow could get there. Haines grinned at him, looked at the gates and made a jumping motion, as if he wanted to jump his rig over them and get going. Sandesty grinned back, though he couldn't see that it was very funny.

Then he yelled. It was not directed toward the *Tucker* but to the barge.

"Hey! Watch them blasted lines!"

Pete and Chuck Fitzgow wheeled toward him. They had been taking advantage of the fact that the master was temporarily out of sight and had been engaged in some horseplay. They had not noticed that the upriver end of the barge had swung out a little from the guide wall. From his elevation Sandesty could see the warning, wedgelike sliver of water that showed there. The upper mooring line had slipped around the deck cleat. Even then the youngsters didn't seem very worried as they raced to grab the loosening line.

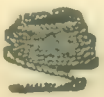
Sandesty was plenty worried, for he knew what that current could do. He whirled and raced back into the control house and shut down the valves. Leaving the *Tucker* suspended halfway in its descent, he spun again, raced down the steps and charged along the river bank.

The guide wall was timber-cribbed and had been built to dress the shore and keep river craft clear of the huge rocks studding it. The current there was always heavy, very fast now with the flood water. Sandesty's throat tightened as he surged forward. The youngsters didn't realize it, but that water had a drag that made the biggest Diesel ever built puny by comparison. With that upriver pry against the capacity-loaded hull, they had let themselves get caught in a mighty dangerous predicament.

They were still laughing, though jerking at the line, as Steve clambered over the cribbing and leaped across to the deck.

"Take another turn on the cleat, blast it!" he raged, angered by their amusement.

They tried it, too fast, and the additional turn slipped off. This momentary release let the tie-line slide out even more. The increase in drag registered instantly, and the line began to pull through their hands.



SANDESTY threw himself forward and grabbed hold behind Pete who had sobered and was straining now until his eyes bulged.

Somebody was yelling useless instructions from the lock, and Sandesty turned his head enough to see that Haines and his crew had come piling up the steel ladder on the inside wall of the lock chamber, and were plunging toward them. With a sinking feeling, he realized that the line could not be held until they got there.

The bow had pivoted out into the current at a forty-five degree angle now, putting a terrible strain on each of the three tie-lines. Haines had just leaped from the cribbing to the barge deck when the bow-line was torn from the hands trying to restrain it.

The barge lurched so violently that all four men were thrown flat. It steadied for an instant while the middle snub-line took the full strain, tautened and snapped like a thread. The lower line went immediately and in the same way. The barge swung free into the current.

On the shore, half a dozen faces congealed in horror. Seconds passed before those aboard realized the full extent of their peril. Then Arnie Haines staggered to his feet, his face frozen, his jaw working.

"It shouldn't have happened!" he croaked. "There wasn't a chance in a thousand!" He seemed to realize, now, his own delinquency in the matter, that he should have made certain the barge was securely tied and not left it to a pair of irresponsible young sprouts.

Sandesty felt anger at this type of repentance, even while thinking desperately ahead to the danger crowding them. The barge was careening wildly. There was a slight chance that she would nose into the masonry of the outer chamber wall, for an instant, as she wheeled downstream.

One or two of them might have a chance to jump for it, if there were some way of foretelling which part would touch so they could position themselves for it.

Arnie Haines was taking charge, or trying to. Some of his bravado had returned. "Shuck your shoes, men!" he bellowed. "We'll have to swim for it!"

"Swim, hell!" Sandesty blazed. "You said there was only a thousand-to-one chance this'd happen. But it did! I'm saying there's a thousand-to-one chance of living, if we use our heads! If you're thinking to swim that current, Arnie, there ain't a chance in a *million!*"

He knew whereof he spoke, for in his day Sandesty had seen many a river man with more muscle than sense try to pit his strength against flood water.

The bow barely touched the outer pylon, and at the same instant the stern hooked into a boil. There wasn't a man within twenty feet of the right spot, during that fraction of time, to try to jump for it. Then the barge was twisting and bobbing toward the main stream. Its unwilling passengers were forced to their knees, obliged to grab the deck piping and hang on for dear life.

Sandesty's mind churned desperately. Once clear of the inshore boils and eddies, the barge steadied a little, though its careening onrush was not checked. The banks at this point were five hundred feet apart, but heavily studded with great boulders. The river bed split itself on the rapids about two miles below the upper canal entrance. At the foot of the rapids were the falls.

For the first time Sandesty noticed the several lengths of heavy iron pipe lashed to the regular piping on the deck. The gasoline barges often carried such light deck loads, and the pipe, he knew, was probably destined for use in repairs at the tank farm at Jinker's Landing. As the pitching steadied, Sandesty hoisted himself to his knees, studying the situation.

THEN his knife was out, and he was slashing the line securing the pipe. Pete crawled toward him, then Arnie Haines. Haines' eyes showed interest.

"Think we can rig up a drag?"

Sandesty shook his head. "No. A sweep. We've got to try to steer ourselves."

They skidded the longest length of pipe down the deck. Though it was thirty feet long, it looked puny for the work intended for it. Sandesty let less than half of it overhang the water, thrust between the two posts of the snubbing frame in the stern. He snugged it there securely in a rope cradle.

With all four men braced on the slightly longer end of the fulcrum, they let the outboard end of the pipe dip gently into the boiling stern water. The barge lost some of its wild sideslip almost instantly.

Arnie Haines was anxiously scanning the south shore. "Well, we got a haywire rudder. Oh, for a little power!"

Steve Sandesty's lip hiked briefly in a mirthless grin. The Diesel man's fangs were pulled, now that he didn't have a thousand horsepower to kick against the current. Long forgotten thoughts and instincts were stirring in Sandesty.

"There's a strip of sand yonder!" Haines yelped suddenly. "We better try to cut into that!"

Yes, a steam man had something, Sandesty discovered, that a Diesel man, with his power and his doodads, never needed to learn. A man whose only mechanical reliance was a big wooden paddle wheel powered by a wheezy steam boiler, had to make up the difference out of his own wit and strength. He had to know his river, its perils and expediences. He had to navigate a lot by instinct.

Putting in to either rockbound bank, Sandesty knew, would be immediately catastrophic. If the barge collided with a rock it would upend or go over sidewise instantly and in a gigantic upheaval of water that would drown them all. Though he lacked technical knowledge on the subject, Sandesty did not care to ponder the results should friction on the rocks generate sufficient static to detonate the load of high test.

They were bearing down fast on the rapids, now. Haines took another look at the head of the gut and yelped.

"Goddlemighty, Sandesty! Let's turn her in!"

Sandesty's feet were planted solidly. He never gave an inch. He looked at Haines, said, "We wouldn't have a chance, Arnie! We'd grind up a hundred feet off shore! With power you could nose her onto that little strip of sand, ahead. Only you ain't got your brand of power with you, Arnie."

Haines stared at him in amazement. "Then what you figuring to do? Criminy, man, we can't go down through the gut!"

"But that's where we're going!"

Sandesty was a fair man, and he admitted that in their place he would be just as disconcerted. They were aware only of the wildly raging waters, the perilous rocks and the falls

looming ever more closely ahead. Their instinct was to put in to shore at the earliest possible moment, and he couldn't blame them. They didn't have his feeling, something that come back to him out of the long gone years, for the water and the situation.

"You sour-pussed old goat!" Haines roared. "You're trying to drown us all!"

"Listen, Arnie! With the sweep we can hit the center channel through the gut. It offers our only chance of getting down! I didn't shuffle the cards, Arnie! I didn't name the odds!"

Panic was clouding Haines' eyes. "And at the end of the center channel are the falls, you lunatic! I'll take my chances here!"

Sandesty saw the man's glance touch Fitzgow's, then Pete's. He read the telegraphy of the man's squinted eyes, saw response in the others. The gut was less than half a mile ahead of them, now rushing toward them. Haines surged toward Sandesty.

Young Pete did an unexpected thing then. As Chuck Fitzgow moved in obedience to Haines' gesture, Pete stepped forward, barring his way. Sandesty's horny fist cocked back and impacted on Haines' jaw. The packet master looked dazed, frozen in his tracks, then he sat down on the deck pipe.

The improvised sweep had been freed for an instant and was a hard thing to catch again. But in a moment, the barge was holding straight on the course Sandesty had plotted again, straight into the central passage through Silverthorn Rapids and down over Silverthorn Falls!

This was water that no boatman had ever tried before. Where they had had the leeway of considerable space before, they now found themselves in a swirling channel scarcely a hundred feet wide. Yet it was the calmest, clearest channel through the rapids, Sandesty knew. But there would be turns and every manner of rushing menace to meet and contend with in small fractions of time.

Arnie Haines touched Sandesty on the arm. Sandesty looked at him, saw that his eyes had cleared of panic.

"She's your ship, skipper," he grunted. "Tell me what to do."

It took only minutes to shoot through the mile and a half gut, yet time seemed to have congealed. A strange calm had come to Sandesty, inspired by the knowledge that the other three had placed their fate in his hands. The old feel of the river was in every bone and fiber of Sandesty as he directed their efforts at the crude sweep. He was glad of the swollen waters, which had submerged many a menace and straightened out many a whirlpool. Yet menace remained in plenty—the breath-stopping moments when the barge swooped narrowly around a bend or grazed a rock or lanced through a boil. They could do little more than to keep it lined out.

Then came the agonizing moment that all had awaited in terror. Abruptly the rocks melted away and the river flowed back into one.

"Down flat!" Sandesty roared.

Two hundred feet ahead the river level broke suddenly, in a great, rounded line. The peaked-up roar of the falls drowned out all else.

Sandesty knew that their chances were no better than he had pictured them. If they landed endwise below the drop the loaded barge probably would not capsize. The danger was that she would split her seams under the terrific impact. Or blow up or land sidewise.

Sandesty stayed at the improvised sweep until the very last second. The others had obeyed him, stretching themselves flat and grasping the piping. Pete's eyes found his father's, and the boy grinned. Sandesty dropped and grabbed hold of the snubbing frame.

The barge shot straight out, leaving the water for an interminable time. Sandesty prayed briefly as he awaited the outcome. Then they hit water again in three pounding and skipping impacts that sent torture through Sandesty's body but told him they had overshot the boil at the foot of the falls.

Then the bow went out of sight and for an agonized instant, Sandesty thought they were going to spill end over end, after all. His breath had been knocked from him, there was an excruciating pain in his spine, and he took in the rest of it in a half-blind daze.

Arnie Haines staggered to his feet and lunged toward the helm, which was sweeping wildly. The barge gentled a little then swung around into quieter water. Sandesty saw that Chuck Fitzgow was lying motionless. Hurt. Then he discovered that Pete was nowhere to be seen.

But this was by far the quietest water they had been in since the barge broke its moorings, a fact that Sandesty had counted on heavily. Ignoring the pain in his back, he staggered to his feet.

Then he saw Pete, swimming in powerful lunges toward the barge. And the kid was still grinning! Sandesty understood now that Haines had swung the barge around toward Pete to pick him up. A great sigh broke out of the lockman's throat. Below stretched a long sweep of sand bank. They could put in anywhere they chose, now. And in a moment Chuck Fitzgow groaned, then climbed to his feet.

Young Pete helped his father up the bank, a half hour later, and perhaps Sandesty leaned a little more heavily on him than he really was obliged to. But it was Arnie Haines who put the deep seal of contentment in him. When they separated at the lower lock a little later, Haines thrust out his hand. He grinned, but there was none of the old cockiness in it.

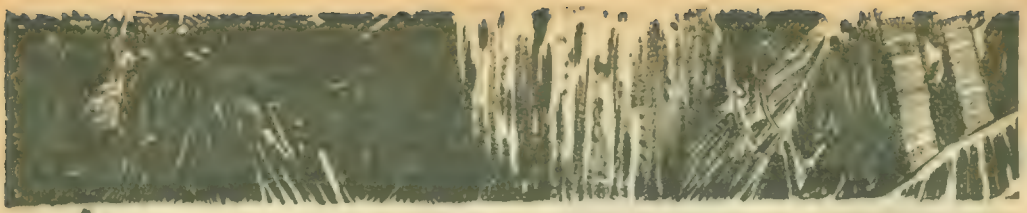
"I'd sure like an invite home with Pete for some weekend, Skipper!" he said. "I reckon there's *still* plenty you old steam guys could teach us Diesel stiffs about a river!"

NEW

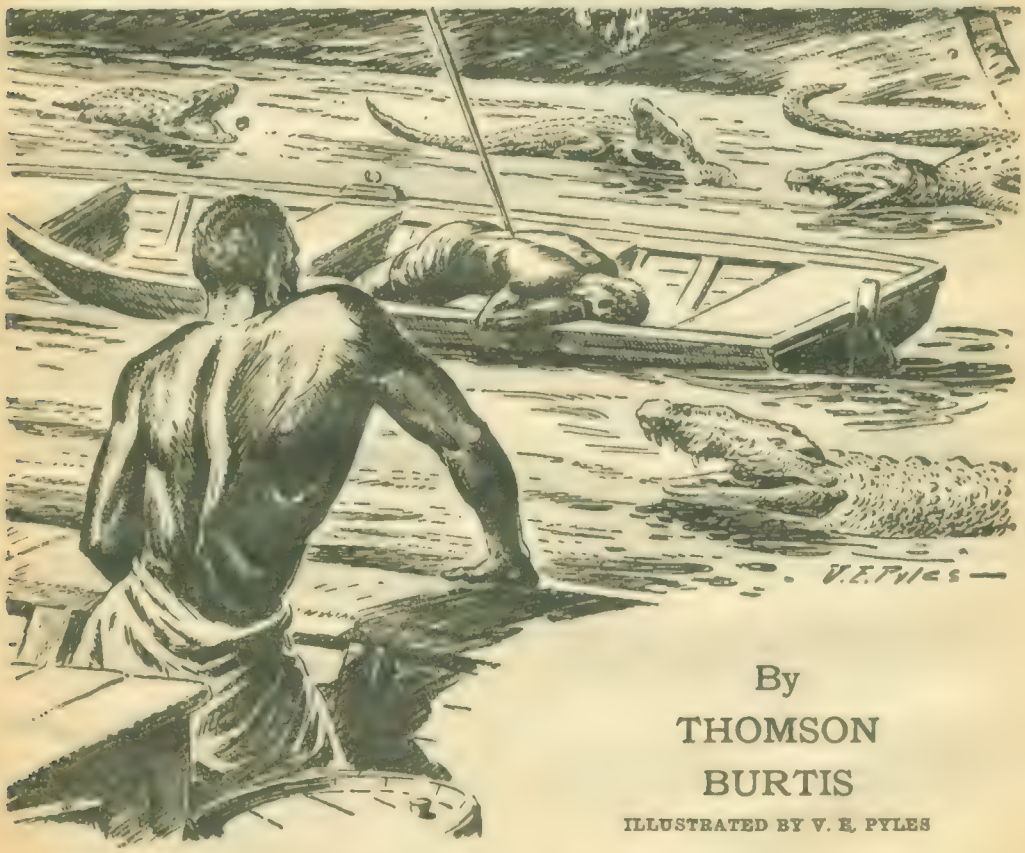
Transfixed to the planking by a hard-driven spear was the naked body of Bardai. The crocodiles were wild with the smell of putrefying flesh.

THE STORY THUS FAR:

CAPTAIN ANDREW SINCLAIR, ex-World War I flier, doctor, scientist, explorer, owner of the schooner *Seeker,* decides to quit the South Seas where he has been roaming aimlessly since the end of the war and return to civilization for study and research. Before he can start the long voyage home, however, he is persuaded by the fabulous JUMBO JOHNSON, trader and adventurer, to engage in a pearling expedition with the possibility of cleaning up a quick fortune later in New Guinea, a vast and unexploited territory, if the pearling partnership proves mutually satisfactory. After a short time Sinclair learns that he's been played for a sucker by Johnson, an unscrupulous crook, who only wants to acquire the *Seeker.* Sinclair winds up in an Australian jail after having been caught by the authorities with the forged pearling licenses Johnson has foisted on



GUINEA GOLD



By
THOMSON
BURTIS

ILLUSTRATED BY V. E. PYLES

him. His boat is appropriated by the government and Johnson promptly buys it at auction for a song and vanishes.

Having served his sentence, Sinclair's one idea is vengeance on Johnson. Broke and cut by his old acquaintances who regard him as an ex-criminal, Sinclair finally becomes an itinerant beachcomber roaming the Pacific in search of Johnson. In the course of his wanderings he encounters NICK BRANDON, an old R.F.C. officer, who is now flying a plane into the interior of New Guinea for a gold-mining company. With him is a girl, SANDRA HOPE, daughter of the outfit's president, who is flying in to visit her father. They will bring out a load of bullion—several months' accumulation at the mine.

Months later, having reached Santa Cruz in his fruitless search for Johnson, Sinclair meets VIVIAN DAUBREY, an aristocratic British remittance man gone to pot with drink, and his fawning cockney hanger-on "MOUSY"

"A lot of things can happen to a man coming down the river," Daubrey reminded Sykes.

SYKES. The pair is as crooked as Johnson ever was and out to get a quick stake. They tell Sinclair that they know the location where Brandon and the girl, Sandra, have crashed in the jungle on their way out with the bullion, and that they intend to salvage it. They need a man with bush savvy such as Sinclair has to help them into the interior of New Guinea. The added information that Johnson is also on the trail of the gold is sufficient to persuade Sinclair to go along.

On the way to Port Moresby to refit Daubrey's schooner, the *Susan*, for the expedition, two native crew members vanish overboard. Sinclair is sure that they have been murdered because they know too much about how Daubrey and Sykes acquired the boat, stealing it from her former owner after killing him.

PART II

SIX WEEKS later Sinclair, at the the wheel of the *Susan*, was steering the boat between Kaimari, on the Puarari River and Daru Island, just west of the Florel—halfway along a hundred-and-seventy-mile stretch of almost solid delta. A succession of rivers—the Baroi, Kikori, Auro, Turama, Omatii and Bamu, climaxed by the mighty Fly—poured their torrents into the sea through hundreds of mouths, and hurled their silt-laden waters farther into the Pacific than the eye could reach. The Fly alone, seventy miles ahead, was reputed to pour more water into this ocean than the Amazon did into the Atlantic. And knowing the Amazon, Sinclair still could not but wonder how even the Fly or Florel could be impressive on a coastline where even forests seemed to stem from an extension of the sea.

A twelve-foot tide was now ebbing. The most recent changes in the ever-shifting sandbars—islands of silt and temporary mudbanks built up in the teeth of the sea—had caused Bumidai, the coastwise native pilot, to decree that the *Susan* could proceed for a space in the lightning-shot darkness. They were following a temporary deep channel within a few hundred yards of the submerged shoreline. Before long, Bumidai would take over and squat the *Susan* complacently on a sandbank, there to wait for morning and a new tide to float them. At his request, the compass was covered with a piece of canvas. "Compass he no good," Bumidai had squealed. "Me see plenty good close up land. Land he change. Bumidai see you fella no finish." *Finish* was Bumidai's pidgin equivalent of *die*.

Down below, in the cabin amidships, Daubrey and Sykes were drinking.

They had been doing it, off and on, for days now, and Sinclair could scarcely blame them, for they had nothing else to do. The fact was that for several reasons Sinclair had been encouraging their high consumption of alcohol. With a crew of four plus the pilot and his nephew and Sinclair himself, the sixty-five-foot *Susan* could be handled without their aid.

What could be seen now in the continuous lightning was enough to make any man think of a drink.

Great stands of mangrove and a species of eucalyptus and palm rose from the water that covered the earth where it seemed that land ought to be. Closer, great expanses of slimy ooze formed islands, bars, peninsulas and capes, the latter covered with greasy driftwood over which brown, viscous rollers washed sullenly. Dun-colored surf, waves of thin mud, seemed to be carrying in their murky depths a repulsive mass of crawling things from the turgid depths of the sea. The filthy ooze was like a land mass just forming at the dawn of the earth from the waste of creation, spawning life on its seething surface. Only the seagoing crocodiles, four-legged, fast-running maneaters, seemed to belong there and to have evolved into final form.

Up above, the rolling clouds and dank mist might have been the steam rising from a witch's cauldron, and when the moon peeped through the black thunderheads, it could have been the face of the remote being attending the stinking brew below.

On an island close to the mouth of one of

the numberless streams was a village, like two lines of crudely built beehives set on a small forest of sawed-off mangrove trunks. Sinclair, who did the trading for produce ashore, had visited a dozen like it, and could see every detail in his mind's eye.

Two walks built of slimy, loose mangrove logs fronted the two lines of huts which faced each other, and bypaths gave access to the thatched hovels. One had to be surefooted to keep from being precipitated into the concentrated slime, ooze, water, shellfish and every variety of human and animal filth below. In that turgid mass, pigs would root and naked children would play, protected from crocodiles by a rotting fence through which the great saurians often found their way.

And many of the villagers, either stark naked or wearing a little something fore and aft for protection, not modesty, would not be satisfied with their ordinary condition of extraordinary gaminess. Most would be in mourning—if not for a relative or mate, for a favorite dog. Hence they would have covered themselves from head to foot with the slime of the delta. Often they would have bound their limbs with tightly tied vines, and the women would wind a corselet of them over their breasts, chinked up with mud. With ornaments thrust into nostrils and ears, bushy hair arranged into fantastic headdresses, plastered into permanence with mud, they would crawl about on the rotten logs whereon they lived like so many earthen statues come to life in roughly human form.

As suddenly as though the cosmic cook attending his primordial stew had decided to add something to it, a solid wall of water spilled out of the sky. Before Sinclair could put on the sou'wester beside him, he was soaked in the steaming rain. He rang for the engine to be stopped, and was not surprised to find Bumidai at his side. Sinclair would have given a sizable share of whatever profit he might make out of the trip if this black man would consent to go on upriver with them. The mere mention of Lake Murdoch and the upper Florel, however, sent this ex-village constable of the Papuan Native Police into a fearful silence.

"Tide he altogether closeup gone," Bumidai shouted. "Better Taubada sleep."

CHAPTER VI

IN VINO VERITAS

AS SINCLAIR made his way amidships, the rain stopped as though a faucet had been turned off. He leaned against the deckhouse, and the drunken mumble from below turned his thoughts again to the surprising interview he'd had with the Lieutenant Governor himself in Port Moresby. His Excellency, a retired army officer who had been educated at Sandhurst, had seemed more British than Australian. Still under fifty, he had been invalided out of the service after Mons.

"Cor! You're the cool 'un, Dook," Sykes replied. "Three's a crowd and two's company. . . ."

Brilliant brown eyes had stared at Sinclair from a long, sallow face, and he'd stroked his drooping cavalryman's mustache thoughtfully as he pushed papers across his desk and said, "Asked you to look in, Sinclair, because I am personally a bit uneasy about your recent associates—including Johnson. Unofficially, your wild tale might have a bit of truth in it. No excuse, you know. An old R.F.C. man, white and over twenty-one, should have some common sense. Go hard with you if you got into any more trouble, Captain, and you may be asking for some with your present companions."

"Yes, sir?"

"They cleared Singapore with Captain Atmore, three-quarters white. Claim he was washed overboard in the storm along with others. No reason to doubt it. No reason to believe it. There really was a mild typhoon. Point is, Captain Atmore was known to be carrying almost five hundred pounds cash. How they got their boat we know—classmate of Daubrey's owned the *Susan*, had no use for her because he spent most of his time on his rubber plantation. Handed her over to Daubrey and Sykes for a share in their enterprise. The money they have—claim to have won it gambling. No way to prove otherwise."

He'd leaned back in his chair with the sporadic weakness of the convalescent from malaria.

"You have nothing to add to the story of the loss of those two seamen out of Santa Cruz?"

"Not at the moment, sir. I know they were drunk, and they were already overboard the next time I saw them."

Sinclair had removed horn-rimmed spectacles from his pocket, then. He did not actually need them, but had found that occasionally they rested his eyes when he was doing a lot of reading. He adjusted them now to help impress the Lieutenant Governor. They did make him look like a scholarly and rather unworldly young man. He reached for the papers.

"I do not want to make the same mistake twice," he said. "Would you mind if I glanced over these?"

"Haw!" exploded His Excellency. "Go ahead."

Everything was in order, from clearance for the *Susan* to contract with the government and permission to go into the backcountry. Lounging back in his chair, Sinclair's mind was far from those papers as he looked up and said diffidently, "I take it that you'd like me to uncover any evidence regarding what might have been multi-murders in the course of this trip?"

"Rum thing—and I didn't say so—but I would. Unofficially, of course, I think you have more evidence already."

"If I did, it wouldn't stand up in court," Sinclair said. "Furthermore, in my opinion, the state and the law will best be served by allowing me to take advantage of this opportunity to go upcountry and look into the gold, the cases of Daubrey and Sykes, and also Mr. Johnson."

"Meaning that if you had evidence against your partners, you wouldn't divulge it now?"

"I didn't say that, sir."

"I think we understand each other. Really hope we do, you know—unofficially." The tall, wasted figure leaned forward across the desk. "Wish I were going with you, damme if I don't," he said. After which His Excellency leaned back and became official. "Having already been convicted of being an accessory, at best, in a crime, don't be—for too long, that is—an accessory after the fact of another, if such there be. You—er—understand me?"

"Perfectly."

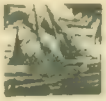
His Excellency relaxed, and said casually, "Government has everything to gain and nothing to lose by allowing you to look for the lost gold, and hand over two-thirds of it. Means around a million to us and half that much to you chaps. Just warning you, my boy. Watch your step as far as the government is concerned, and as far as your associates are concerned, too."

"Thank you, sir. I rather thought that Johnson was going to look for the lost gold, too."

"Only a miner's and prospector's permit. Gad, sir! You don't suppose the pirate had the bullion in the back of his mind, too?"

"He would be too smart, according to the judgment of your own courts, to attempt to swindle the law," Sinclair said evenly.

"Haw!" remarked His Excellency. "That's all."



NOW, aboard the *Susan*, Sinclair was thinking for the thousandth time, "The law is sure that Daubrey and Sykes killed those seamen because the seamen knew they'd killed Captain Atmore under cover of the storm. I do, too. If I don't come back from this trip with additional evidence, Port Moresby may think I was in on it."

However, that dilemma could wait. More important than proof of past crimes, to Sinclair, was what Sykes and Daubrey might have in mind for the future.

That was why he was sleeping in the main cabin with them, instead of alone in the after cabin where, as captain, he had every right to bunk. It was why he had made no objection to a copious supply of liquor being brought aboard the *Susan*, and was one of the reasons he was encouraging its rapid consumption.

It was Sykes' voice which assailed his ears now as he climbed down the hatch into the main cabin.

"A cool 'undred thousand quid between us, Dook," Mousy was saying hilariously in his incongruously high voice. "Algernon Sykes of Lime'ouse a-rushin' around the streets o' good old Lunnon in 'is fine carriage—who'd a thought it?"

"Don't be stupid, Mousy my lad," came Daubrey's still crisp syllables. "It won't last forever. You invest your capital, old boy, and lucky to get three per cent. Greetings and salutations, Captain. A drink against the foul weather without, and all that sort of thing?"

"I've been nipping up above," Sinclair lied. "But I'll have a nightcap."

He poured himself a heavy drink of Scotch, for two reasons. One was that he could use it; the other to avoid the onus of being a teetotaler, and thereby a holier-than-thou in Sykes' eyes, if not Daubrey's.

He drew at his watered drink slowly and talked idly, starting to nod, although he wasn't sleepy, when he accepted a second. He sipped it as he undressed, and as he crawled into one of the starboard bunks answered Daubrey's polite apology.

"You two can drink around that table until daylight, and bang on kettles to accompany yourselves in *God Save the King* and I'd never know it."

Soon he was imitating the regular deep

breathing of a sleeping man working up to an out-and-out snore.

For a while the two oddly assorted Britishers talked of nights in Singapore, but two drinks later Sykes returned to the subject of his coming wealth. Certain it was, Sinclair reflected, that they seemed to feel that the vast fortune in gold was as good as found. It might be merely childish optimism, on Sykes' part, but that Daubrey took it for granted was important. Certainly they had not shared all their information with Sinclair.

"You was a-sayin', Yer Washup, about investin' the ready," Sykes reminded Daubrey with jovial drunkenness, "and referrin' to my stoopidity. Bowin' to 'Arrer an' Oxford, may I mike so bold as to enquire—"

"You're drunk," Daubrey told him with frank distaste. "Nevertheless, I will enlighten you, old boy. Silly to spend your capital. Goes faster and faster. So you invest it, what? Lucky to get three per cent at home on a really safe investment—net, after income taxes. That gives you what, on thirty-three thousand pounds? In round numbers a thousand a year. Roughly, twenty pounds a week. You could spend that every week on the Singapore waterfront without half trying. And if you buy a house, and a motor, start to support even one fair lady—"

"It could go quick, couldn't it?" Sykes admitted, gazing at Daubrey with the unwilling respect which he could not always conceal. "And you should be the cove that knows, m'lud—the cove that knows. Before you becyme a remittance man, and then a remittance man without a remittance, I'll wyger you threw that much to the dysies every week, what?"

SINCLAIR, peeking with one slit-like eye from the shelter of the pillow, noted that Daubrey's bony face was pale as death, save for two red spots in his gaunt cheeks. The deep hollows of his eye-sockets gave the effect of being flooded with wan illumination rather than concentrated in the eyes proper.

Neither his hand nor his voice shook as he poured another drink, looked at Sinclair, listened to the rhythmic snore and said calmly, "If there were only two shares instead of three, the income would be ten pounds more a week, each, and your capital would be fifty thousand pounds instead of thirty-three."

For a second there was utter silence, and then Sykes breathed, "Cor!"

The hairs of his mustache quivered as his upper lip twitched. He darted a look at the snoring Sinclair.

"A lot o' things can 'appen to a cove in the jungle," he half whispered.

"Or, for that matter, coming back down the river with the good old bullion safely filed away in this tub, what? Up to a point, we need him, so let's hope there aren't any accidents too soon, Sykes."

"Cor!" Sykes said again. Then, because he was fuzzy with drink, he slapped his thigh in delayed appreciation. "You're the cool 'un, Dook, and no mistyke! One gets 'urt, and after 'e's done 'is bit, too, and then there's only two sittin' on the bullion right aboard this boat, and no one to dispute our word about what 'appened. Besides, I 'ad a funny feelin' when he come on deck the night the two sylors—fell overboard. Three's a crowd, and two's company—and—one . . ."

His voice trailed off. With infinite care, Sinclair opened one eye the tiniest fraction of an inch while he increased the enthusiasm of his snores.

The eyes of the two men were locked across the table. Sykes' face was congested with blood, his head sunk between his shoulders, his palms pressed to the surface of the board, as though to help him spring across it.

Daubrey lounged easily in his chair, the faintest of contemptuous smiles on his slack, bloodless lips. They opened a little, to say without moving, "And only one could take it all, but that would be a bit on the lonesome side, don't you think?"

Slowly, Sykes sank back in his chair. But there was no more ease in him, nor did the joviality in his voice or laugh ring true. Whether or not he was thinking about what Daubrey might do to him, or what the Dook had suggested that Sykes might be thinking of doing to him, Sinclair knew that from that moment henceforth there could be no more real trust between Sykes and Daubrey than there could be between himself and the pair of them.

Tension hung in the air like a tangible substance. Sykes was obviously fighting against going to bed, but finally he passed out. Daubrey sat at the table, motionless save when he poured himself Scotch at regular intervals. Hollow eyes staring at something only he could see, he seemed to be waiting until merciful unconsciousness should overtake him.

Sinclair had no interest, one way or another, in the spectacle of that suicidal drinking. For the third son of Lord Cranston, he had decided long since, would be infinitely better off dead.

With that cold calculation which had become a part of him lately, Sinclair had learned, by apparently casual questions, almost all there was to know about Vivian Daubrey during the weeks in Port Moresby when they were laying in stores, refitting the boat, and attending to the infinite small details incidental to the expedition. Daubrey, he was sure, was a pathological sensualist, consuming himself in the fires of his gnawing frustrations. When temporarily in small funds, as in Port Moresby, the aristocrat's pendulum swung to the farthest point of a tragic arc, with no gutter too filthy to roll in, no companion too foul to share it with.

All this, slum-born-and foc'sle-bred Sykes knew. The sailor, unable to rid himself of his instinctive deference to "the quality," took sadistic delight in the sight of his superior befouling himself with the dregs of the waterfront. That gave Sykes his excuse to qualify his fawning praise of his superior with poisonously jovial references to Daubrey's lust for wenching and drinking. At any time, though, even a look of reproof from Daubrey sent Sykes scurrying back into his humble hole.

Sinclair could not decide whether or not the cockney realized that to Daubrey, Sykes' opinion of him was not only unimportant—it did not exist.

Which was as it should be. For Sykes was not only completely unmoral, he was without character, and hence without control over his instincts. In this respect he was like a savage, who was like a child, and not far from an animal. Born into a "world he'd never made," Sykes, furthermore, was ruled by fear and would fight and kill more often for that reason than for gain. If he tried to kill Daubrey, Sinclair reflected, it would be as much out of fear that Daubrey would try to do away with him as for the extra share Sykes would have in the treasure.

He had killed those two sailors, Sinclair was sure, because he was afraid they would talk. Daubrey, by himself, would have bought their silence with money and promises. Which did not mean that he had not passively assented to Sykes' panic-stricken reaction to the danger they represented.

Daubrey would murder, for a larger share of the gold which would buy him his heart's desires, the same man whom, under other circumstances, he might risk his own life to save. He would kill with icy self-control, but the deed would fester always in his subconscious alongside innumerable other running sores, and add to the poison they were pouring into his mind until only madness could bring relief.

CHAPTER VII

A NOSE FOR DAUBREY

THE two Englishmen were still tippling three days later when the *Susan* was beating toward the Florel, this time from the west.

They had spent a day at Daru Island, and Sinclair had had no trouble persuading Sykes to stay sober, and Daubrey to exude a favorable amount of charm on the somewhat difficult officials. As a matter of fact, Sinclair was inclined to believe that Sykes, when drinking, usually appeared drunk and was reasonably sober, whereas Daubrey always appeared sober and was reasonably drunk.

Sinclair himself, on the excuse of looking over the forbidding island, had done a great deal of thinking. Jumbo Johnson, in a shallow draft tub, had cleared Daru five days before. His purpose was prospecting for gold on the upper Skirton, and his boat could not make the speed of the *Susan*, in the officials' judgment, within three knots an hour.

That was just like Johnson, Sinclair reflected. He had not wanted to let the news get about that he was after the lost bullion. Too many others would think it worth a try. If, as a prospector, he found it, he could announce the fact after he returned to the coast, and give up the legal share to the government. The most sensible way to get the stuff out, as Daubrey had indicated, might be to use a seaplane from Lake Murdoch. If the treasure were actually located, unlimited financial backing could be secured, and government cooperation.

But Jumbo was upriver. The hell with the gold.

The four officials, aided and abetted by two residents and a missionary, had tried hard to find some flaw in the documents, in order to delay the departure of the white visitors a little longer. Sinclair could not blame them. The minute mud-pimple on the face of the earth which was Daru, its slime mercifully hidden by mangroves, must surely be the most ghastly government station on the globe.

After proceeding for an interval through the mist curtain which hung between Daru and the forty-mile-wide estuary of the Florel, a terrific downpour cleared the air. In bright sunlight they entered the shallow course into Tauru Passage, which was marked by stakes, and were soon cruising peacefully down the waterway between Parama Island on the east and the mainland on the west.

Once again, Sinclair was trying to persuade Bumidai to go on up the Fly with them instead of dropping off at Meridi plantation. An expression of mingled cunning and fear spread over Bumidai's countenance.

"Black fella he bad. Stranger he finish alonga him."

With monkeylike mimicry, he thrust with a spear, shot an arrow, wielded an imaginary axe, and then ate what he had killed.

"White fella boom-boom with firestick," Sinclair pointed out. "Black fella he finish. Bumidai have tobacco, good kai kai all time, work for white fella altogether—"

But Bumidai would not listen. The mere mention of the upper Florel appeared to fill him with unuttered forebodings, as though there were things he could say but dared not.

The Admiralty charts were of no use at all in the constantly shifting archipelago of islands. As the tide ebbed, the *Susan* stuck on a hidden mudbank. Ahead was the vast inland sea of the estuary. There was nothing to do but wait for the incoming tide to float them.

Sinclair was continuing to encourage the consumption of the last of the liquor aboard. Better it be finished now than remain to create incidents upriver. He had gradually cached more than a case of brandy. Now he suggested a drink in the cabin, and after seeing his protégés safely started on a session with the bottle, went back on deck to catch a nap in the shade of the forward deckhouse.

Bumidai shook him awake. Black clouds were rolling low in a mighty aerial whirlpool, the southeast wind off the sea was rising to a gale, and seaward heavy dun-colored surf was breaking thunderously. But that was not why Bumidai had roused him, nor the reason for the crew boys chattering and laughing.

Floating down-current in the last of the ebbing tide were great chunks of grass and reed-covered earth—thin islets of various sizes ripped from the banks of the river. This was a not uncommon phenomenon in this land of almost continual flash floods. Along with them bobbed various types of flotsam and jetsam loosened along with the muck of some tributary stream—which was now beginning to clot around the stranded boat. The crew was trying to fend it off, without success. As the rain started, the great chunks of dirt rapidly built up a floating area of dry land. Poking at the ones nearest the boat did no good—protruding roots clung and twined in powerful snags, locking the bits of land together.

"Tide he fix," Bumidai said. "Him big. He come close up, boat fella go fast."

Sinclair nodded. It was a funny sight—a sixty-five-foot schooner in the center of a tangled island grown up with reeds and long grass and ferns and sprinkled with driftwood, set miles from land on the ocean edge of an inland sea.

BUMIDAI went down into the engine room. The rain was a solid, steaming curtain of water billowing in the wind. Through it, Sinclair could see only a few hundred yards downstream toward the growing thunder of the surf. The ever-growing island, with the boat its core, started heaving to the preliminary surge of the incoming tide.

As always, when he had no means of appraising accurately what he had to contend with, Sinclair was restless and on edge. He would call Bumidai. The pilot, having come as close to being born and raised in the water as any human ever had, seemed to understand the language of sea and river and delta as fluently as Sinclair could translate the wheezes and clanks of the four-cylinder auxiliary motor into a statement of its condition.

As he went forward, he saw a log come to life on the edge of the islet and drag a drowned pig beneath the scummy water. Then the yawning jaws of another crocodile appeared over the upstream edge of the islet. Tangled in its driftwood fringe was a dead dog. The eighteen-foot reptile crawled out of the water on perilous footing and then used its powerful short forelegs to apply a backward drag to the carcass.

In the cabin amidships Sinclair found Daubrey and Sykes asleep. He strapped on two .45 pistols and caught up a rifle and a box of shells.

All they needed now was a covey of crocodiles crawling from all points of the compass toward the boat. He shook the two men awake and both rolled out promptly. They were getting guns as he came back on deck to find Bumidai already there. An expert shot, Sinclair had bored two advancing crocodiles neatly through the eye with the .45s by the time Daubrey hit the deck. He got a third with his second shot from a rifle.

Two more of the prehistoric monsters were clambering aboard the acre or so of debris and dirt and boat when, as though animated by a single thought, they dropped back into the water and submerged. Bumidai grabbed Sinclair and pointed with shaking arm. Sinclair turned into the teeth of the howling storm to see an eight-foot wave, like a wall of mud crowned with driftwood of all sizes, break with a crash at the very limit of their vision through the rain.

Now the floating dirt hemming in the *Susan* was loosening and cracks were appearing here and there. It was fortunate that the earth had fended off most of the driftwood—some of the mangrove logs were a foot thick and there were heavy timbers from forgotten wrecks weighing hundreds of pounds.

"Big wave he may come close up!" Bumidai shrieked. "Big fella tide he come—"

"Down below!" bawled Sinclair through the driving rain. "Batten down all hatches—hear me, Daubrey?"

Daubrey and Sykes ducked below, leaving the hatch amidships open for Sinclair. Bumidai hearded the frightened crew below and helped secure the forward hatch. Sinclair ran aft and covered over the after companionway. The aft cabin was used as an auxiliary storehouse and was stuffed with trade goods, ammunition and food.

Then, as Bumidai ran aft and Sinclair forward, toward the center of the boat, Bumidai's upflung arm and contorted face made Sinclair turn his head.

Racing toward them like some ravenous beast, crowding light flotsam and driftwood before it and carrying a more deadly arsenal of weapons on its crest, was a wave all of fifteen feet high. It was a mass of viscous mud, the foam on its crest dun-colored and filthy, its opaque wall festooned with seaweed and wreckage and silt.

No man, tossed and pounded by tons of

debris and mud, could remain alive in the swirl of its break.

Bumidai's scarlet-painted lips opened wide but his scream was inaudible. All his life Sinclair was to remember the sight of that gaping red mouth filled with teeth, coal-black with lime and betel nut. Then Bumidai, following Sinclair, leaped toward the open hatch.

He slipped on the wet deck. His ankle turned, and his head crashed to the corner of the deckhouse as he fell. The wave was but fifty yards away as Sinclair, half into the hatch, vaulted back on deck.

Bumidai's glazed eyes were open and he tried feebly to move, but could not. Sinclair lifted him and dropped him down the hatch in a heap.

Now the backwash from the edge of the islet started the break of that mighty wall of water. As its crest rolled over to crash on the fringe of the floating island, Sinclair knew that he could not get into the hatch and secure the hatchcover, before that mighty mass of water boiled over it.

He slammed it shut and leaped to the after edge of the deckhouse. Ten feet ahead of the seething whirlpool of silt-laden water and its deadly cargo, he jumped for the after mast. Long fingers gripped it, and he gathered up his legs only six inches above a log which almost snapped the mast in two. Like some elongated monkey, borne aloft on the surface of that cauldron of wind and wave, he swarmed up the mast just ahead of the rising water.

Now the sturdy pole was shivering, and both masts were describing dizzy circles which followed the gyrations of the hard-pressed schooner. The deck was still under water, but the boat was being thrust forward and upward.

Then it was as though someone had turned off the faucet in a sink, and the water in its bowl came to rest. The *Susan* emerged groggily from the welter of waters. They subsided gradually, and the mass of the floating island disintegrated like a water-soaked cracker.

Now the *Susan*, riding the rise of the tide, was being carried upstream at a two-knot clip.

SINCLAIR slid slowly down the wet pole. The deck was foul with silt and debris. By some miracle, no piece of wreckage had crashed against a mast solidly enough to snap, or even crack it. Binnacle and compass had come through undamaged, but a spare wheel would have to be installed. The after deckhouse was cracked, and the dinghy which had reposed on the foc'sle deckhouse was bobbing in the water, a few feet away, in bad need of repair.

Then came the welcome coughs of the engine. His carefully selected crew, under boss-boy Adla-Bawi, knew their business and what was good for their health.

Bumidai crawled out of the center hatch, hobbling on a turned ankle.

"Daubrey fella hit head along table, Taubada," the pilot said, as though very weary. "Dykes fella he hurt. Daubrey fella say you come close up."

The crew piled on deck. The rain had ceased now as the motor putt-putted into life, and New Guinea appeared a little more livable.

Bumidai plucked at his sleeve. "Inside me fine. Taubada want me fella stay alonga him?"

"Taubada give much for Bumidai fella stay close up altogether along him."

"Bumidai, he finish. Taubada he pick Bumidai close up when water he come. Bumidai he stay."

"Good. Other white fella, they no savvy jungle. No savvy black fella spears and arrows. Bumidai, he watch when me fella sleep altogether dark or light. Me watch when Bumidai he sleep."

"Yes, Taubada."

Sinclair looked down at the gnarled, powerful black man, and wondered at the warm feeling of content and confidence which filled him at the knowledge that he would have the aid of the semi-savage against the machinations of three white men. That Bumidai would also be his ace against the upriver jungle and its inhabitants was a secondary matter.

He gazed thoughtfully at Bumidai and weighed what he was going to say. Adla-Bawi was already paddling a long plank toward the water-logged dinghy, with a rifle in front of him against the possibility of a crocodile becoming interested in upsetting his frail craft.

"Me fella tell Bumidai truth," Sinclair said slowly.

Bumidai had once been a proud village constable of the Papuan Native Police in a coast settlement, and then risen to the dizzy height of sergeant, traveling on the patrol boat. On an expedition in the northeast Pawi country some months before after natives who had killed white men, Bumidai had been ranking native officer. The blacks, police and bearers alike, had thoughtfully provided themselves with many small shells, because a proportion of the girls of that country were disposed to give their all in return for this rare and much prized currency. The white officer had finally been forced to order the blacks to turn in all shells. Bumidai had raged through the camp, tracking every bit of coinage to its lair. Some days later, however, his frequent nocturnal absences had caused the white officer to conduct a search of his own. He discovered that Bumidai had neglected to turn in his own shells.

That was his finish as even a lowly member of the constabulary, and as close to a tragedy as is possible to a native of his sort.

"Me fella maybe do something alonga big government fella in Port Moresby. If me fella

do this, and Bumidai he help, me fella see that Bumidai fella be alla same policeman again. Bumidai fella he understand?"

The submissive native's eyes gleamed, and every black tooth showed in childlike delight.

"Yes, Taubada!"

"Very affecting, 'pon my word."

Sinclair turned toward the hatchway, and said conversationally, "Good God!"

Daubrey was half out of the hatch, leaning his elbows on the slimy deck. The middle of his face was one ghastly red smear of mangled flesh which had once been a nose.

"I was falling one way, and that heavy lamp the other, old boy," Daubrey said with a groggy attempt at lightness. "Professional services required, what?"

"I'll say. Get flat on your back," Sinclair said.

He followed Daubrey down the hatch, gave him some morphine, and brought the stunned Sykes back to consciousness. Together they laid out the necessary tools from the finest medical kit that had been available in Port Moresby. The injured man had insisted on including that in their stocks. With only a heavy dose of morphine for anesthetic, and pots of hot water for sterilization, Sinclair went to work.

HE KNEW that from lack of practice he wasn't much of a doctor, but from a great deal of unconventional experience under primitive conditions he admitted to being a hell of a surgeon. He took some skin from Daubrey's thigh and grafted it to the flesh at the nosetip which he had not cut away. He had demanded utter silence, and not until he was stitching up the edges of his handiwork did he even meet the dulled eyes below him. Then he said calmly, "You know, Daubrey, your nose is going to be a little shorter and a little narrower at the tip, and there may be some scars. But I wouldn't be surprised if you liked it better than the old one."

A quick gleam in Daubrey's eyes was his only answer. Finally, as Sinclair was bandaging, Daubrey spoke exactly as though there had been no interval of silence. Sykes was too interested, or awed, to emit more than an occasional hushed "Cor!"

" 'Twas a poor thing—the old one—but 'twas mine own," Daubrey said. "Must have had a premonition, insisting on the best medical attention, what? Don't even care whether the good old medico has his own fish to fry, or perhaps is a government spy and all that."

"Wot's that yer sayin', Dook?" snapped Sykes.

A bowl of bloodied water in his hands, he thrust his head forward like a gopher's from its hole.

"Heard Sinclair here telling Bumidai, of all people, that he had government work to do. Or did my ears deceive me, Captain?"

"Not at all," Sinclair said calmly. "Concerns Jumbo Johnson, as a matter of fact, plus an accurate semi-scientific report on what we find above Lake Murdoch. Unexplored except by airplane, you know. And I don't mind telling you that I was warned against you two."

"Why?"

Daubrey's tone was lazy. The bowl shook a little in Sykes' hands.

"Don't pretend to be stupid," Sinclair said. "They haven't got anything on you, as you found out in the port examination. That doesn't keep them from speculating how you just might have used the typhoon to get rid of a captain so that you could use the money you knew he had aboard, and then, as soon as you didn't need them, got rid of the two seamen who knew what had happened to the captain."

"Now if I was the law in New Guinea," Daubrey said lazily, "and thought along those lines, I might ask a bloke to keep an ear and an eye open for evidence against us, and then confiscate our shares of the gold before they hanged us."

"Silly," Sinclair said above Sykes' heavy breathing. He carefully placed a piece of adhesive tape over the nosetip, and fussed over its anchorage on either cheek. "What evidence could I get except word-of-mouth? Main thing to remember would be, I imagine, that if anything should happen to me, and consequently you two divide my share of the gold, the government might take a dim view of it."

"Quite," agreed Daubrey. "On the other hand, if we got an idea that we'd talked in our sleep, or when drunk, in a manner you might misunderstand, some men might calculate that it was better to take one's chances on getting rid of a witness whose story, true or false, could get them into trouble."

"If there were such a witness," Sinclair agreed. "This is all pretty academic, isn't it? You couldn't go a foot without me, and I couldn't without you, and we all need each other no matter what we are. None of our life histories would pass the censor, you know."

He stepped back to survey the blob of white protruding from Daubrey's face. He could feel the relaxation of Sykes behind him.

"Fair job, if I do say it myself," Sinclair said. "Take it easy there in bed until tomorrow. You've lost a lot of blood, and those patches where I took the skin need to remain quiet."

THERE was an odd look in Daubrey's clouded eyes, as though a thought was trying to be born. Sinclair stared straight into them until Daubrey said, "Thanks for closing the hatch before the bloody mess hit. Appears

I'm in your debt, old boy, and I hate to be in a chap's debt. Softens one up, what? Anyhow, thanks and all that, and if the positions had been reversed, any of us would have done the same, don't you think "

"Of course." Sinclair smiled serenely. "Applying for a new nose puts the applicant under no obligation whatever, et cetera."

Sykes burst into a high-pitched laugh.

"Leave it to the Dook," he said as he went out with the bowl of bloody water. "I've 'eard silly conversations in my time, blimey if I 'aven't, but this one fair bowls me hover, that it does."

"I take it that Bumidai is now your private slave and bodyguard, what?" Daubrey said.

"The boy is jungle-wise," Sinclair said. He was becoming sleepy. "I heard all I could in Port Morseby, but my knowledge is partly theoretical. You and Sykes haven't any."

"Sure it's the jungle that you think you need a bodyguard against?"

"Any man who hasn't respect for head-hunters, crocodiles and the jungle," Sinclair said evenly, "is a fool. And any man who isn't afraid of the combination of gold, jungle and drunkards is a damn fool."

For a moment their eyes fought. Then Daubrey smiled.

"Touché," he said. "From now on, all work and no play, what? I answer for Sykes. What you're afraid of, I don't know precisely, old boy, but it struck me you were getting a bit melodramatic with Bumidai, 'pon my soul it did."

He was asleep before Sinclair had finished cleaning up.

Sinclair's mouth relaxed a little as he reflected upon the Machiavellian tinge of some of his plans. What lay ahead not only excused but even required a plan of action which took no account whatever of the brotherhood of man.

In Port Moresby the head of the Native Police had shown him some spears brought in by an expedition to Lake Murdoch. Sinclair could imagine those monstrous points being drawn out of his body and shredding six square inches of it to pulp. He knew that up in the dark vastnesses of the upper Florel were tribes who buried their dead in shallow graves, and after the flesh had rotted away, fashioned arrowheads out of the bones. A scratch from one of them meant almost certain and unpleasant death by blood poisoning.

Jumbo Johnson was up there somewhere, too. The problem wasn't merely killing him, or coming to an agreement. It was the task of getting him back to civilization, in a mood to tell the truth when he got there. Or to secure a signed and witnessed confession before he got there.

Sinclair reflected that exceptionally severe methods might be necessary. But of all the things that lay in wait in the dank depths of the never-never land ahead, the lean explorer wondered most about Vivian Daubrey of Harrow and Oxford, third son of Lord Cranston of Cranston.

One could figure roughly what a crocodile or a savage, or a Sykes or even a Jumbo Johnson would do. But what might emerge from the tortuous depths of a Daubrey's mind Sinclair didn't even dare to guess.

With passionless objectivity he thought of Daubrey as representative par excellence of infinitely the most dangerous thing alive. The weapons, mental and physical, he could command and use had been perfected and disciplined by the arts and education of the civilized world. More important, the instincts and emotions which might drive him to use his equipment were almost as naked and uncontrolled as those of the savage. But where a savage would react with simple, if deadly, naiveté to uncomplicated urges, Daubrey would be driven by passions stimulated by civilization which, if they broke leash, could carry through an orgy of destruction beyond the power of a whole army of headhunters to conceive.

The doctor in Sinclair, not entirely selfishly, wished that he could do something about Daubrey. Also that his new nose would turn out all right. Even that might help a little.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAW OF AVERAGES

AFTER leaving Medina and its discouraged plantation—administered by a white man and his wife of even more hopeless aspect—the slow cruise up the Florel resolved itself into an ever more eerie ordeal. As the solitude apparently became more complete, the feeling of hidden life and unseen enemies close at hand became stronger.

And the further the *Susan* proceeded from the coast, the more dangerous those enemies would be.

The fifty miles from estuary to plantation had been a succession of huge community houses where the tribes ate and slept with, at most, low bamboo partitions between families. In one huge structure, built as usual on sawed-off mangrove pilings and covered by a roof of thatched palm leaves, two tribes speaking entirely different dialects dwelt together. There were not three savages in each tribe who could understand the other. The occasional tribes who lived in separate huts always had a huge Ravi—clubhouse and headquarters for men only. These were built in rough imitation of a crocodile with its mouth open, facing the water. One was a majestic structure seventy feet high at its yawning mouth, and only ten feet high at the other end—an architectural masterpiece.

As Sinclair went ashore in the dinghy at village after village to trade an axe for a pig, or tobacco or beads or shells for bananas and yams and cocoanuts, he marveled anew at the fact that tribes only a few miles from each other had spoken a different language and followed almost entirely different customs for uncounted generations. In the communal houses or Ravis, each warrior had his individual frame containing the heads obtained by himself or his ancestors, and those heads had invariably been secured from tribes little more than shouting distance away. Where one village merely cleaned and hollowed out the skull, another, a few miles away, might stuff the eye-sockets with clay and place in it a bead or berry to simulate an eyeball. One group of splendidly tall and strong tribesmen attached elongated false noses to their heads, decorating these striking probosces with ornate rows of beads.

Head hunting was, supposedly, a thing of the past in these semi-coastal regions, and the natives unanimously respected and feared the white man. One custom all had in common—the smearing of themselves with stinking mud from the riverbank to indicate mourning. Otherwise their fig leaves were as various as the foliage of New Guinea. The height of "chic" twenty miles below Medina was a sort of horse's tail of vines, worn rakishly in the rear; and four miles away, a bark apron was the mode. No one, at any time or for any reason wore anything but neck ornaments above the waist. Bones or feathers through the nose was *de rigeur* for dress-up occasions, and often the ear-lobes were used for the same purpose.

As the *Susan* proceeded on north of Medina, however, all human life seemed to cease abruptly. At six knots they putt-putted against the two-knot current through solid seventy-five-foot walls of giant trees, so interlaced with vines that each bank was like a riotous, opaque stage set. Orchids flamed above the trees and birds of paradise, lyre birds, hornbills, Goura pigeons and a thousand other species called and sang and flashed briefly out of the depths of the jungle, only to disappear into its dusky depths with an effect of magic.

Sometimes the river was all of five hundred yards wide, and the expedition felt safe in its center. At other times, closer to the kaleidoscopically lovely banks, Sinclair knew as well as though he could see them that a hundred eyes were peering at them from only a few dozen yards away. In these locations a constant watch was kept, and all hands aboard were ready to drop behind the solid wooden deck-rail at the first sign of trouble.

Sinclair occupied a good deal of his free time in practicing marksmanship on the crocodiles with his two .45s. He kept his hand in with the boomerang and knife, at short distances, to the great admiration of the crew and the grudging, rather perplexed respect of Daubrey and Sykes.

With Bumidai aboard, Sinclair felt safe in training the entire crew to use firearms. It was certain that Jumbo Johnson would have a number of riflemen in his crew and the lines of carriers he had either brought along, or would secure. His craft would carry several more men than the *Susan*, according to the estimate of the men at Daru Island.

THERE was so much driftwood floating down the river that Sinclair ordered the boat anchored at night and extra watches kept. He himself was on watch just before dawn on the night before they should reach the confluence of the Skirton and the Florel, when he heard a thud against the boat's side

"Driftwood," he thought idly, and resumed watching the vast fairyland of fireflies dancing in the thinning jungle. Then he became alert, for dawn is the time of danger in the back country of Papua.

As details became visible in the growing light, he saw a long stick protruding from the side of the boat, just above the waterline. Sunk two inches in the sturdy wood was a three-pronged spear in the shape of a narrow trident.

"Shy blokes, eyen't they?" chuckled Sykes, a little hollowly. "Blimey, wot a callin' card."

The white men were at breakfast, and Sinclair took the opportunity to say, "According to the two expeditions that have been there, the Lake Murdoch cannibals are shy, frightened and fierce. Sooner or later, I've got to know exactly where we're going after that gold. If it's some distance afoot, we've got to take time enough to tame these savages into being bearers for us—"

"Contain yourself, Captain," smiled Daubrey. "Cross no bridges, what? You're in charge of the expedition, but I'm the big 'un on the gold, eh? And damned glad I'll be to get into open country where, if some dashed semi-human ape heaves an arrow at me, I can at least see him."

A great blob of bandage still adorned the center of his face, but he had assented to Sinclair's suggestion that he not look at himself in the mirror until healing was further along. He had likewise quit drinking entirely, at a cost which made Sinclair shudder.

Night after night the lank Britisher went through the tortures of the damned in his dreams. Seemingly innumerable specters from the past rose out of his subconscious to haunt him. Sinclair kept a sharp eye on him, looking for signs of indulgence in those morphine pills, but there were none. He was sweating it out, and showed remnants of thoroughbred class in doing so.

Sinclair looked at him now, wondering whether it was time to assert himself finally. Deciding against it, he said, "Evidently they're spear-fighters through here. The country is opening up, and by the time we reach the Skirton tonight, the scenery, and the mosquitoes, will probably make us wish we were back in the jungle."

Which became exactly true at six that evening, as far as Mousy Sykes and all the natives were concerned. And neither reed-covered banks, backed by vast swamps, nor the open, rolling grassland inshore were responsible for their sudden homesickness.

It was Bumidai, at the wheel, who spotted it first.

"Taubada! Boat come alonga us! You come hurry up."

Sykes was already on deck, and Daubrey and Sinclair hurried from the after cabin where they had been checking stores. The crew was chattering excitedly as Sinclair hit the deck, and focused his binoculars on the dot which was floating out of the wide Skirton and into the Florel a half-mile northward.

It was a dinghy—a white man's dinghy.

"And nobody in it," he told one and all. "Must have got loose at night."

"From Johnson's boat," Daubrey said crisply. "What was the name of it?"

"The *Early Morn*," Sinclair said.

"Don't forget that the last expedition up here lost plenty of men, and some boats. Chances are this is one the natives have been using ever since."

He was focusing on some black spots of driftwood which were keeping perfect formation with the dinghy. After a long look, he took down his glasses.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "there's something in that boat. Half the crocodiles in this part of the world are following it."

He drove the boys to work, ordering Bumidai to steer a course that would intercept that of the ghostly craft bearing down at them through the unearthly black and crimson sunset. He swept the bank with the binoculars. Ten-foot-high reeds and monstrous ferns were little less impenetrable than the towering jungle farther south. There were occasional patches of unusual fertility covered with a tangle of creepers, but freshwater mangroves seemed to be the only trees. There were none at all growing on the great stretches of what looked like good grazing land which began a quarter mile from the river's banks.

Sinclair thought of Sandra Hope and old Nick Brandon, and what had happened to them months before. He would have given much more than a year off his life to be certain that both had been killed instantly in that crash.

The *Susan* was quiet save for low-voiced communications between the frightened natives. Sykes had gone down the hatch to get a drink. Daubrey was lolling nonchalantly against the mainmast. Sinclair took another look through the glasses.

"No name on it," he said slowly.

He forced himself into complete calm and Daubrey, a little pale, was nonchalant as he offered Sinclair a cigarette. Sykes came on deck carrying five rifles and some shells.

"I can't see one of them big lizards without wantin' to shoot it," he said. "If—"

Then a cry from Bumidai made Sinclair whirl as though stung. He yelled, "Hit the deck!"

EVERYONE dropped, but the cloud of more than fifty arrows which had flown from the bush, fell just short of the *Susan*. Had they not maneuvered almost to the center of the stream to intercept the dinghy, that barrage of undoubtedly poisoned darts from unseen bows must inevitably have left their mark.

"The hell with crocs," grated Sykes.

He did a fair job of concealing it most of the time, but his terror of the headhunters was so great that only gold could have lured him to where he was.

"Shoot over their heads," Sinclair ordered.

"Shoot over their heads, hell!" the limey snarled, firing level into the jungle.

Evidently Daubrey felt the same way. Methodically they poured lead into that wall of fern and mangrove and reed, and one high-pitched scream was their reward.

"Stop it, I say!" Sinclair yelled. "They're as frightened now as they ever will be—anything extra will just mean more vengeance! And we've got to drive those crocs away from the dinghy!"

Sykes was beside himself in the reaction from his fear of the arrows, plus sadistic delight in killing. "Who's talkin'?" he sneered.

Sinclair walked toward him softly, like a cat. And he spoke as softly.

"The captain's talking," he half-whispered. "I hate to complete the process of making the black crew think you're a drunken pig instead of a godlike fella, but you lift that rifle at anything but a crocodile and I'll knock you cold, tie you up for mutiny, and keep you there!"

"Why don't you?"

Daubrey threw down the gauntlet casually. "I have noticed your quite successful efforts to align the crew behind you, and against your employers. Don't stop now, old boy."

Sinclair stared at him for a long few seconds. "The natives, like dogs, don't trust alcohol," he said very slowly. "They know there are white pigs as well as black. This crew will throw you both into the brig, if I order them to, because of what they've seen and not what I've said. Sykes, call your shot. Now. You, too, Daubrey."

Daubrey eyed him coolly. Then he shrugged his shoulders and fingered the bandage on his nose.

"Be a little silly of me to risk a punch on the nose, wouldn't it?" he said carelessly. "And you're right, you know. Three white men against all the natives in this part of New Guinea, and we fight at the drop of an unkind word. And we think we're civilizing the blacks. My apologies. You, too, Mousy."

"Sorry, blimey if I eyen't," Sykes mumbled.

"Bet you a quid to ten shillings I get more of those blighters than you do," Daubrey said urbanely.

The three proceeded to kill seven alligators with approximately twenty shots. Bumidai and the boss boy joined in, but the crocs would not be frightened off. Now that the dinghy was close, the odor of death was so nauseating that the bravery of the reptiles became understandable.

Sykes had once remarked jovially that Daubrey's allergy to foul odors was all that kept him from native girls. Now the Britisher's face was turning green, and he was gulping frequently.

He said nothing about his nausea, however, as the *Susan* maneuvered alongside the ghastly smallboat.

But he had to do something about it when the entire ship's crew of the *Susan* lined the rail to look down into the bottom of the maverick dinghy.

Transfixed to the planking by a hard-driven spear was the naked body of Bardai, Johnson's man and sometime diver for Andrew Sinclair. As Daubrey went to the opposite rail to be sick, and Algernon Sykes whispered to himself, Sinclair signaled Bumidai. The pilot obediently dropped over the side, withdrew the spear, washed it in the river, and handed it up to Sinclair. The crocodiles, wild with the smell of putrefying flesh, soon got their reward. Bumidai threaded ropes through the two sets of davits on the opposite side of the dinghy, and the crew overturned it. The crocodiles almost wrecked the little boat as they fought for their shares.

"No anchor tonight," Sinclair ordered as he sloshed the spearhead around the water. "Close up black fella he bad. Upriver maybe more better."

The arrow men ashore were either keeping still as death or had melted away through the thick, low growth of the riverbank as quietly as the crocodiles. The latter, their battle for the food over, were slithering away through the muddy river. As Sinclair carried the spear to Sykes and Daubrey for their inspection, he was wondering if conceivably the dinghy and its burden and the ghostly rain of arrows were connected in any way. Could a tribe have traveled down the riverbank in the hope of gaining possession of the white man's craft, which for some reason had been allowed to get away? Sooner or later it would beach itself. The crocodiles would have kept the savages out of the water. It might be an inland tribe raiding, without canoes of their own.

"We'll make the Heberd by morning," Sinclair told the Britishers as the *Susan* got underway against a one-knot current. "That should take us out of our shore friends' territory. How would you like to be stuck with this?"

There was method in his question, and the detail in which he pointed out the spearhead's worst features. He wanted Sykes to be in such a panic, and Daubrey himself filled with such dread of possible wounds, that Sinclair's own contentment and safety would be as important as the gold itself.

The point of the weapon was almost eighteen inches long, contrived of cassowary bone. Starting three inches back of its tip, finely carved, cunningly curved spikes angled backward toward the handle. Their tips were as sharp as the point of the spear proper. They were of various lengths from three inches to a foot long. The artisans of no medieval torturer would have conceived or constructed a more horrible weapon, designed so that the entire cluster of rearward spikes would enter

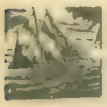
a body easily and tear a huge hole in it when pulled out.

"Cor!" whispered Sykes.

"We wouldn't consider it sporting to stick a pig with that one, would we?" the pale Daubrey said casually. "I don't mind saying, old chap, that Viv Daubrey is having his first drink in three days because he rather needs it."

Suddenly Sykes had a pleasant thought to wash away the bad taste in his mouth. "Blimey!" he said suddenly. "You don't suppose the black devils pounced on Johnson's whole party and one of 'em 'as a blond head in 'is bloomin' pigsty?"

"I doubt it," Sinclair said. "Probably the man was caught alone in the dinghy. Better turn in early, gentlemen. We should hit the Heberd just before dawn, so it's up at four and a continuous alert."



THE *Susan* was as good as his word, and a little better, for at dawn she was rounding the first bend in the hundred-yard-wide, fast-running tributary which was fed by Lake Murdoch, forty miles northward.

It was mid-afternoon, as a new stretch of river came in sight around a bend, when Andrew Sinclair took the longest breath he had inhaled in a long time.

Immobile on a sandbar a few feet from the far bank, his bushman's eyes could see through a sudden torrential shower the details of something which was only a vague shape to Daubrey and Sykes.

"You said Johnson was going up the Skirton, didn't you?" he asked as he took the wheel from a native and angled the *Susan* toward that sandbar.

"Positively, old chap," nodded Daubrey.

"Well, he's quite a smart man around New Guinea, gentlemen," Sinclair said, keeping excitement out of his voice. "Unless, I'm mistaken, that hulk over there is a shallow draft tub answering to the description of the *Early Morn*, and it seems to have floated down the Heberd, out of control!"

He'd spoken nothing less than truth for the deserted craft was splotched with blood. Three gruesome bits of kinky hair, attached to shreds of skin, befouled the deck. All the stores were gone, and every bit of metal possible to loosen—with what Sinclair, from the marks, felt sure were stone axes—had been taken away. There was no canvas, no clothing, and scarcely an unmarked plank. A large number of natives had gone on an orgy of destruction, as though they had improvised axe blows into one of their hysterical war dances.

The three white men met amidships. Sykes' mustache was wriggling excitedly and his shoe-button eyes were overbright.

"Johnson was doublecrossin' us and the Royal Austrylian Governmint, that 'e was!" the man from Limehouse cackled happily. "A-sneakin' up the Heberd to find the gold by accident, so to speak, whilst supposedly prospectin' for pye dirt. And no two-thirds to Port Moresby, neither. And now—"

"Control yourself, my good man," Daubrey said incisively. He lit a cigarette with a hand that shook. "What do you think, Sinclair?"

"I think that the man with the best connections in this part of the world got information as accurate, or more so, than your own, from native sources," Sinclair said, his mind only half on what he was saying. "Which is a compliment to your own findings. I think he left a guard of his Kanakas on the boat, and they were surprised and had to run for it. In the boat, I mean. But the natives succeeded in ambushing them upriver somewhere, and it floated down here."

"You think Johnson's alive?" Daubrey asked.

"It's hard to believe that Jumbo Johnson, on a boat, could be licked by natives," Sinclair said, an empty feeling inside him. "But those natives were smart enough to ambush several white men not too long ago. We may find his head in some Ravi up there, or he may be up-country with native bearers, fully equipped and after the gold. And without any idea that he has no more crew and no more boat!"

"Let's 'ope we find 'is 'ead, the bloody sneak!" Sykes said piously. "A comin' hup the 'Eberd when 'e's supposed to go hup the Skirton!"

"Rather a perilous position for the lad, good as he is, if he's alive," Daubrey said thoughtfully. "Leaves us with all the high cards, Captain—including legal permission to seek the treasure, what? I should say that, should we collide with the gentleman, any methods necessary to maintain our rights would be justified, what?"

"Anything at all, Daubrey, anything at all," Sinclair said. Then he went on, according to the plan he had formulated within the past few minutes. "We've got the legal rights to salvage the loot, and he hasn't. That won't prevent him from fighting like a wildcat for it. And unless I'm wrong, he'll have with him a bunch of the Hanaubada boys. He buys all the pottery and furnishes all the supplies for the entire tribe. Sort of a god to them. They'll do exactly as he says."

It made Sinclair feel better to pretend that Johnson was surely alive.

"Meaning a pitched battle, with guns and everything?" Daubrey asked.

"If we don't play it smartly. If we collide with Johnson there's only one thing to do; pretend to make him a partner, use him and his boys, and at the proper time leave him holding the sack. Remember that he not only hasn't got a boat, but he doesn't know he hasn't."

"Look here, old boy," Daubrey said, "you

and Johnson were once partners. Why shouldn't you throw in with him and ditch us?"

Sinclair stared straight into the hollow eyes.

"Because he left me to face the music alone on our illegal pearling deal," he said evenly. "And because he stole my boat. But understand this, both of you—"

Sykes leaned forward a little, mustache wriggling as though to sense what was coming.

"I'm no angel, but you boys may be, for all I know or care, murderers. I'll play this game on the level but if I have good cause to believe you have any intention of doublecrossing me, I'll take your boys and join up with Johnson. Understand?"

He was prepared for any reaction except the one he got. This was over Sykes' head, and all the cockney could do was glower, shoebutton eyes glinting with meanness and uncertainty.

"Quite," Daubrey said. "And I quite understand that whereas Mousy and I were once two against one, we're now distinctly in the minority. I don't think that under the circumstances, Captain, you need to worry about our loyalty to you. Bit obvious, isn't it?"

"Then you needn't worry about me," Sinclair said.

He could fairly feel the calculation going on in the minds of the two men who, he knew, planned to kill him as soon as his usefulness was over, but he did not care. Rather, he welcomed the excuse for using any methods which seemed called for, within or without the code.

He lit a cigarette and with entirely unscientific exultation thought, "By the law of averages, at last I get a break! After a year, I get a break!"

Something of his thoughts must have shown through in his eyes for Daubrey glanced at him shrewdly, and Sykes said, "Blimey, if the captain eyen't a-gettin' excited-like 'imself! Bit of a cold fish you've been, Andy. Johnson's bein' about mykes things seem more definite-like, don't it?"

"Quite," Sinclair said quietly. "Maybe he and I can make a deal on that boat."

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST HEAD

THEY made slow progress up the swift-flowing Heberd. Its waters were remarkably clear compared to the dun opaqueness of the silt-laden Skirton and Florel. The lead was heaved constantly, and from mainmast and deck four men at a time kept continuous watch.

No one had enough sleep. Perhaps that was responsible for the fact that when he did get a chance to rest, Daubrey's nightmares decreased in number and violence.

On the morning of the third day Sinclair decided that the Englishman's nose could stand the full light of day.

Daubrey gazed long at it in the mirror. It was just a nose, and still slightly discolored and scarred at that. It was shorter than the snout it had replaced, which added to the length of the unshaven upper lip. By accident rather than design, the shortened nose and lengthened upper lip were in better proportion to the remainder of the long, wasted face than the originals had been.

"Cor!" Sykes exploded with vast gusto. "Trim that mustache to right size and neat-like, and blimey if the Dook won't be better-lookin' than 'e's ever been in 'is life!"

Daubrey smiled, but Sinclair sensed the excitement in him.

"I'd rather fancied something a bit on the Roman side—more distingué, as it were," he said casually. "Pardon me, but I can't wait to get rid of this mare's nest on my upper lip."

From the moment when he had finished the job of reducing the tangled growth which had formed beneath the bandages to a clipped military brush, Daubrey said little but prowled the boat as though it were a cage. He was filled with a sudden restlessness to get the job over.

When Sinclair commented to Sykes concerning this phenomenon, that worthy laughed. "The Dook, 'e's a thinkin' of what a figger 'e'll cut amongst the women with all that gold and 'is new beak. When I think o' what 'e's been able to do to 'imself with no money and that smeller 'e 'ad, it makes a man wonder 'ow long 'e'll last, that it does."

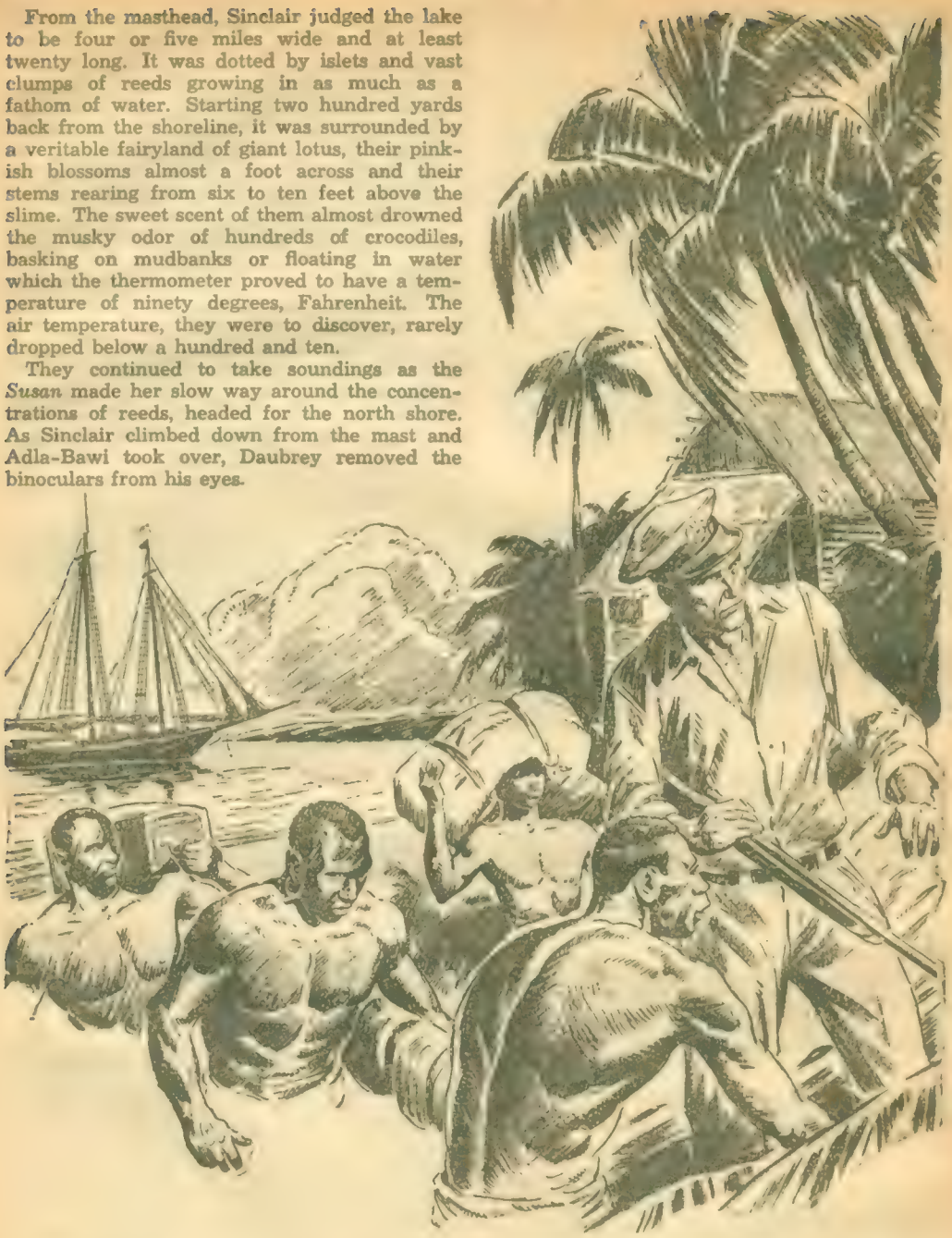
If Sinclair had entertained any vain hopes of attaching Daubrey to himself in the role of dependable alter ego as the result of the operation, he forgot them now. In fact, Daubrey might be even harder to handle now.

It rained torrentially every night, which gave momentary relief from mosquitoes and May flies which penetrated even two thicknesses of blankets around Sinclair's legs. The tiny May flies were even more adept at apparently sifting through solid substances. It was almost impossible to stay long on deck, for they filled nostrils, ears and mouth, if one were so unwary as to open it. These mites saw the light of day at sundown, and in the space of a few hours, bred, laid their eggs, and died before dawn. Each morning, the deck was covered with their bodies, like a very light fine ash.

It was sundown of the fourth day when the entire ship's company lined the rails as the *Susan* poked carefully into Lake Murdoch—the third white man's boat in all history to enter those waters. Northward loomed mountains, their height increasing with their distance, until their crests were screened by angry-looking mist.

From the masthead, Sinclair judged the lake to be four or five miles wide and at least twenty long. It was dotted by islets and vast clumps of reeds growing in as much as a fathom of water. Starting two hundred yards back from the shoreline, it was surrounded by a veritable fairyland of giant lotus, their pinkish blossoms almost a foot across and their stems rearing from six to ten feet above the slime. The sweet scent of them almost drowned the musky odor of hundreds of crocodiles, basking on mudbanks or floating in water which the thermometer proved to have a temperature of ninety degrees, Fahrenheit. The air temperature, they were to discover, rarely dropped below a hundred and ten.

They continued to take soundings as the *Susan* made her slow way around the concentrations of reeds, headed for the north shore. As Sinclair climbed down from the mast and Adla-Bawi took over, Daubrey removed the binoculars from his eyes.



"Take a look, Sinclair, like a good chap," he said. "Over there."

Sinclair looked at a huge, jutting headland. Its upper slopes were unquestionably covered with crudely cultivated yam, sweet potatoes, banana and sugar cane. And behind the palm trees were the vague outlines of a vast structure with palm-thatched roof which was connected with the lake by a narrow path twisting up the steep embankment.

"And that, old boy, is exactly what the old monkey in Singapore indicated we'd find," Daubrey said. "The inlet to the upper stream is within a mile to the eastward. I drew a sort

On an upended spear was a shrunken head. Sinclair said quietly, "That's Nick Brandon's."

of picture map under his supervision, and he pointed out the place."

They had penetrated within a mile of the headland without observing a sign of life save for crocodiles and innumerable duck, cormorant and ibis which rose in swarms from the reeds. From the jungle which started several hundred yards from the lakeshore, separated from it by reeds, swamp, lotus and lower growth, a cacophony of sound from unseen birds arose as they were disturbed by the noise of the *Susan's* motor and the explosions of shotguns. The crew, now all able to handle firearms, was getting itself some duck, and also demonstrating to unseen eyes the power of the "firesticks." The crocodiles got most of the kill, but everyone had a good supper under his belt by the time Sinclair again lined up the complete ship's complement on deck.

Down on the coast, he had endeavored to learn what little was known about these treacherous lake people. Consequently, he knew that *sambio* was their word for friendship, and that waving green bows indicated peaceful intentions. One of the two previous expeditions—the other had been an abortive police foray—had entered that great communal house over there, stripped it of heads and other scientific trophies, and left trade goods behind without ever seeing a native. But at the mouth of the Heberd on their way back to the coast, three of them had been killed before they could fight their way down the river.

So now six black boys and three white men,

waving green bows in one hand, gaudy cloth, shells or strings of beads in the other, and shouting, "*Sambio!*" probed toward the headland like so many maniacs on an insane-asylum picnic.

Then, afar off across the lake, a long canoe darted into sight. Standing erect in the narrow, hollowed-out log, into which one white man could not have stepped without overturning it, were twelve black bodies. Six paddles on one side, six on the other, sent it hurtling across the steaming water like the dart of some monstrous dragonfly. As though pursued by the devil himself, it flashed in and out of sight like a figment out of a dream.

"Better than this ruddy silence, what?" Daubrey said, and Sykes wiped his sweating, unshaven face.

Daubrey had self-discipline enough to keep himself clean and shaved, and Sinclair had learned long since the insidious disintegration which set in if one allowed oneself to become physically sloppy when away from civilization. Sykes grew dirtier and more frowzy looking with every mile they covered.

"With Johnson around, we can't take much time to establish relations," Sinclair stated. "Or to try to arrange for a line of carriers. If nothing works by morning, off we go."

Warily, they brought the schooner to within a few yards of shore, directly opposite the winding path.

SINCLAIR, Daubrey, Bumidai and the strongest—though most frightened—of the crew got into the dinghy. The crewman was loaded with presents in a large box—an axe, much trade tobacco, limes, cloth, beads, and mother-of-pearl in every form from small coin-like pieces to the ordinarily much-prized piece carved in the form of a crescent. One particularly fine gold-tipped shell was left entire.

Sinclair threw his brightly painted boomerang over the reeds and bamboo of the shoreline. It went over the thin fringe of thick jungle below the cultivated land, and returned to hit the water only a foot from the dinghy. Sinclair picked it up, talked to it, held it to his ear and laid it in the bottom of the boat. These devil-ridden natives, he hoped, if there were any hiding alongside that path, would think that the white fellas knew where they were and what they had in mind.

Covered from the boat by the guns of Sykes and the crew, they landed in six-inch deep slime. Shouting, "*Sambio!*" and waving their green bows, Sinclair led them cautiously to the first bend in the zigzag trail. His mahogany face, like the rest of his rangy body, was so lean and hard that it appeared impossible that there was an ounce of flesh from which perspiration might originate, but sweat was dropping from it like rain. His shirt and duck trousers, tucked into knee-high laced boots, were soaking wet. So much water was running down Daubrey's face that he had to wipe his eyes constantly to see.

Sinclair peered warily around a bend. For a moment he froze into a stooping posture. Then he said, as though to himself, "Another hunch, I guess."

The others looked, and drew in their breaths. Katon-Li, the crewman, gibbered with fright.

On an upended spear in the exact middle of the trail was a shrunken head: warning to go no further. The hair was still attached to the skull, the neck had been left long, and a design of red, yellow and white berries was traced on it. The stuffing elongated the head longitudinally and caused the mouth to gape open. The eyes, simulated with clay and berries, seemed to stare straight at the party. And there could not have been two men in New Guinea who had had heads of hair like that crimson thatch.

Sinclair spoke quietly and without expression. "That's Nick Brandon's head."

"Hope it didn't hurt too much," Daubrey remarked coolly.

Katon-Li was literally dancing with nervousness, and Bumidai did not appear comfortable.

"Look here, Sinclair," Daubrey went on, "this is fifty miles from the treasure trove. You say the natives don't stray that far—"

"Nick eluded the natives until he got this far, poor chap," Sinclair suggested absently.

"And the fair lady?" Daubrey said. "Hate to think of it, old boy, I really do. But as long as Brandon had to be killed, I'm relieved that it was in this vicinity. Everything ties up."

Now that the gold had become, even to Sinclair, a tangible commodity, Daubrey appeared to be immune to fear, or hardship, or feeling of any kind except impatience. He walked forward and inspected the head front and rear with interest. As he came back, Sinclair thought he looked a little as though he could inhabit this blood-soaked world as fittingly as his own. That high topknot, death's-head face, and the look in those hollow eyes would have made him a suitable sorcerer, had his skin been black.

"Took off the skin to clean and dress the skull, and then sewed it back on and smoked it," he announced. "Interesting—"

"Taubada—look see!" Bumidai was peering cautiously into the bush beside the trail. "Black fella he fight. Look alonga me."

The black hand swept aside a fern which had cunningly camouflaged a spear thrust into the ground, its waist-high point angled steeply toward the communal house. Throughout its entire length it was studded with smaller points, pointing back toward the handle.

"Bush altogether spears, Taubada. We fella go alonga house. Black fella he come out. We fella run hurry up hide 'um in bush and run alonga boat. Then we finish. Look see alonga me."

Stepping with infinite care, he uncovered two more spears with different but blood-curdling points. Particularly if the trail was blocked and the party forced to run into the bush, all must have inevitably been impaled on the points of the probable forest of spears placed for that exact purpose. And unless Sinclair was further off the mark than was his custom, as least one of those extreme points was made of human bone, with the subordinate spikes constructed of cassowary bone. If so, the tip would be impregnated with the poison of flesh which had been allowed to rot around it. A scratch from it meant blood poisoning.

"We take the head, and leave bows and presents," he ordered.

They made short work of this overture to friendship, and as they shoved off in the dinghy were more than delighted at their own caution. For suddenly more than a hundred Kanakas, wearing the feathered plumes of war dress, materialized from the Ravi, the bush, the very banana tree. In hysterical excitement they leaped about, flourishing spears. Several made short runs toward the boat, thrusting with their spears as though impaling an enemy, and then rushed back to their comrades as though they had done something heroic.

And that never-to-be-forgotten night, at places miles distant from each other, mysterious fires blazed against the brush. One appeared to be high up on the green walls of the mountain only a few miles north of the lake. Then there shuddered through the night air the beat of the drums.

And to their rhythm, the last remains of Major Nicholas Brandon, sometime Major, Royal Flying Corps, were consigned to the waters of Lake Murdoch. Boxed and weighted against the crocodiles, all that was left of that British officer and gentleman sank from view while Sinclair read the time-honored ritual of burial at sea, and Algernon Sykes bawled, for himself more than his fellow countryman.

Then the clouds marched down from the mountains, the rain set in, and the eyes of the crocodiles lurking at a safe distance from the boat went out like so many lights, extinguished by the opaque curtain of water. The wan illumination of the fires disappeared, but the drums continued to boom dully through the blackness which closed in on the *Susan*.

IN THE light of a blazing dawn, with the drums silent, lake and swamp and jungle and mist-shrouded hills became a primeval paradise, and the night a bad dream. Even the crocodiles looked inoffensive.

Mousy Sykes, a tough man on his own territory but a wreck from the strain of the night, could not eat breakfast.

"We can't never get through that bush with them black ipes peekin' at us," he exploded. "I tell you we eyen't got a chance—"

"If the lake people don't make overtures within the next hour," Sinclair cut in, "you won't have to, Mousy. You and the boss boy stay on this boat, in some wide place in the water. You can sink any canoe with a couple of shots before it gets within shouting distance, and after a canoeload or two feed the crocodiles—"

"Yeah?" snarled the overwrought Sykes. "And you blokes find the gold, and where am I, I asks you? Oh, no, culley, I—"

"His confidence in us is only exceeded by his stupidity," Daubrey said. "Where would we be with a ton of bullion, and no boat or stores to get us back?"

"You'll have *us* at *your* mercy," Sinclair pointed out.

"Apologize, Sykes."

Daubrey's voice was like the crack of a whip. Sykes' eyes darted about the cabin like those of the animal he resembled, trapped in a corner. Then they glittered into Daubrey's. He licked his lips, but before he could speak, Sinclair shoved aside his half-eaten breakfast and leaned across the table. He had been waiting for an opening, and he spoke with monumental calm.

"Nerves become frayed at times like this. We are each, until we're well on our way back down the Florel, at the mercy of the others. You two can combine against me. I could poison you both by doctoring your quinine pills, for instance. Anyone could shoot anyone else in the back—"

"And you, my good fellow, could set the black boys on us, what?" Daubrey said.

"We are none of us under any illusions about the others," Sinclair went on. "For a long time to come we have everything to gain and nothing to lose by being all for one and one for all."

Daubrey's voice was cool and collected. "Rum attitude to take, my dear fellow," he said. "Perhaps you've seen or overheard something which you misunderstood—"

"I don't think so," Sinclair said cryptically. "But I know what gold does to people, and I know that two partners would have more gold apiece than three. And that one could take it all. You do, too, and don't try to pretend that either of you, in the recent past, has shown any reason why he should be trusted. Nor me. So as birds of a feather, without morals but with some sense, let's not fail to stick together."

His voice started to grate a little, and his eyes were as hard as though made of the slate of their coloring.

No one could have suspected that the scene, down to the last intonation in his voice, was carefully calculated—another brick in the structure he had been putting together so methodically since that ceremonial drink on Santa Cruz Island. And that structure was merely an addition to the main building, for which the foundation had been laid on the *Seeker* when the ensign had said, "Begging your pardon, Captain, but you are under arrest."

"And this is a good time to remind you both," he said, "that my signed agreement as captain is on file in the proper quarters in Port Moresby. Aboard this boat, any failure to obey my orders on the part of anyone will be considered as mutiny and treated as such. That means I shoot first and investigate afterwards. And I interpret our agreement to extend my captain's status ashore. Now, gentlemen, let's see what the natives are up to."

For a moment it was touch and go. Then Sykes laughed and allowed that the "cap'n was nervous like," and Daubrey shrugged his shoulders. Then they went up on deck, to find at least a hundred naked black men gathered at the foot of the path ashore.

"No women—bad sign," Sinclair said. "But no headdresses—good sign."

"Black fella he no know what to do," Bumidai said. "Him wantum fight—him wantum trade. No can tell alonga us."

Sinclair had each man of the crew and Bumidai make speeches of friendship, in their separate dialects, waving green bows and shouting frequent "*sambio's*" with no observable effect.

"They're as treacherous as they come in New Guinea," Sinclair said slowly. "They've seen just enough of the white man to be frightened, but they know that the white man can be killed. They did kill three, over there at the mouth of the Heberd. And probably Johnson's boys. So we'll give 'em a demonstration, and waste no more time."

One of the boys brought his shotgun and rifle.

After ceremonial posturing, he brought down a fast-flying duck. Then he took the rifle, and dropped to the deck.

"Those palm leaves hung high in the doorway of the Ravi," he explained, "are probably there to ward off the evil spirits. This ought to put the fear of God in them, if I can make it."

He rested the rifle in the railing and drew a very careful bead on the highest palm leaf, hung by a vine to the ridgepole of the great structure which, crude in itself, was nevertheless a miracle of construction when one remembered that it had been accomplished with only sharpened stone axes for tools.

His luck held, and the palm leaf floated lazily to the ground. And as one man the savages melted into the fringe of the jungle. The black men aboard the *Susan* looked at each other uneasily.

"They may think our devils will get into their Ravi, now," Sinclair explained. "At least, that's what a lot of savages in a lot of different parts of the world would think. If so, it's possible that we're not to be monkeyed with now, because our god would avenge us right in their own Ravi."

"Think they're the blokes who shot those arrows at us downriver?" Daubrey asked.

"Not a chance," Sinclair told him. "They couldn't have got back here so fast, unless it was a separate war party. I think the downriver people were raiding from inland. These people are the ones who ambushed the last expedition, though."

"That'll make two outfits we have to get through on the way back," Daubrey said thoughtfully.

"May have to," Sinclair nodded. "These people, or the ones downriver, tasted blood on Johnson's boat, and they'll be trying to repeat, I'm afraid."

"Forewarned is forearmed," stated Sykes. "With the gold aboard, I could shoot my wye through all the black lpes in Papua, single-'anded and with a popgun."

THEY raised anchor and were soon proceeding warily along the north shore of the lake. As they sighted a great vaulted tunnel of trees and creepers, Daubrey's voice shook a little as he said, "There it is—two islets at the mouth and the third a little inland."

Again they started swinging the lead, every man aboard save leadsman and steersman lying prone on deck behind the protection of the railing. A mile of twisting progress in a fairyland of quiet lagoon, and then they heard the chuckling sound of running water. They rounded a horseshoe bend to gaze upon a fast-flowing, pellucidly clear stream, little more than two hundred feet wide at its mouth. They could follow its course for miles through rising foothills covered with solid green. Then the ribbon of silver was lost to sight in the jungle-covering of the first mountain. Some distance up its slope there was a flash of white, which the binoculars verified as swift rapids. Far up the mountainside, just before dark and brooding mist hid its secrets from the world, a waterfall seemed to stem from the shifting vapors itself, as though there and then condensed from it.

Mousy Sykes, laughing and blaspheming like a wild man, broke into a hornpipe, and then dived down the hatch like a gopher into its hole. Daubrey, loose mouth now so tight that the lips were bloodless, looked long through the glasses.

He took a deep breath and smiled at Sinclair.

"We win, Captain," he said quietly, eyes burning with far-off visions. "Every detail correct. The plane came down in wide water between that waterfall and the next highest rapids."

Sykes reappeared, waving a bottle. Sinclair took a drink he didn't want, while he pondered. Miles of river-bed to search up on that peak, in country never before trod by a white man. Very probably the lake dwellers would be cultured products of civilization compared to the hill dwellers. And if ever a location was adapted for ambush by natives, it was the bed of this narrow stream. The treasure hunters would be open targets within easy range of even the most primitive arrows.

CHAPTER X

"THE MELODRAMA CAN WAIT"

FOR the next two days Sinclair watched every heave of the lead as though it might locate the gold—or Jumbo Johnson. Each mile they covered by boat saved an exhausting full day of battling the jungle. And probably a dangerous day, now that they were above the probable territory of the lake dwellers. That blasphemy against the gods of their Ravi appeared to have frightened them, for there had been no sign of their existence. Or of anyone else's existence, save their own.

It was just after dawn on the third morning when the boat grounded on a sandbar, only a mile below the rapids. Providentially for Sykes and the boss boy, the river was a shallow semi-lake here and the banks were more than a hundred yards way.

Nevertheless, Sykes was not happy as the last dinghy-load went ashore. He was frightened at the prospect of being alone with one Kanaka, and chock full of the suspicions of a man who was himself easily capable of any crime whatsoever.

It was a backbreaking job getting the carefully prepared loads of ammunition, trade goods and supplies through the reed-covered swamp on the riverbank and onto solid ground below the towering casuarina palms. Like the chill of the dawn, they indicated that the party was now at an altitude of at least seven thousand feet above sea level.

A cry came from Bumidai, scouting ahead.

"Me find trail alonga here, Taubada!" he shrilled excitedly. "Black fella come alonga here!"

It was at once a heart-warming sight, that narrow path through the jungle which roughly paralleled the course of the river, and a heart-chilling one as well. So silent and apparently uninhabited had been the country above Lake Murdoch that the memory of a night filled with drum beats and darkness lit by far-off fires seemed never to have really happened. This trail, though, was used often. There were signs of recent hacking with stone axes to clear away viciously spiked lawyer vines and other growths impeding the path.

In the absence of a line of native carriers, the loads were suspended from palm saplings, each sagging pole carried by two men. Bumidai and Sinclair, as scouts, went first. Behind them came three of the frightened crewmen, and Daubrey. As a rear-guard there was Baklima, most capable of the crewmen, bearing a staggering individual load along with a repeating rifle.

The going was not too bad the first day, and they found a strategic camping-site on a finger of land projecting into the river. A double watch was kept all night, and at dawn the whole party was alert, but no sign came from the brooding jungle.

The second day was harder, sometimes involving the tortuous negotiation of great tree roots projecting six feet above the ground. And that night, toward dawn and after an hour of rain which was a solid wall of water, the beat of drums throbbed down through the mist from the hidden world above them.

Shortly after noon of the third day they reached a point even with the base of the waterfall. The main trail veered abruptly from the river. A less-used one went down to the riverbank itself, a half-mile westward.

The men dropped their burdens and rested, all facing the jungle on either side. Then Bumidai and Baklima warily scouted the undergrowth on either side. They found nothing, but there was the feel, almost the scent, of human beings in the air.

"This trail almost certainly leads to a village," Sinclair told Daubrey. "By fear or presents, or both, we've got to come to terms with them."

Daubrey waved nonchalantly. Surprisingly enough, the man had become a strong rod on which to lean, and an almost comforting companion. Perhaps the violent physical exercise plus the reaction of his blood to the danger and the gold, burned out the worst and stimulated the best in him. It was as though the fiber of world-conquering and ruling ancestors had been revealed, still in a fair state of repair below the degenerate bloat of the surface. His spirit, or perhaps his impatience, had never flagged, and now his speech was jovial.

"Absolutely, old boy. Be a little bit of all right to have a few hundred of the blighters doing all our dirty work, what? Make 'um big speech now, you fella, and put a bit of the old college try into our boys, eh?"

At that precise second, from somewhere high

above them, there came rolling down through the dank mist the throb of a mighty concentration of drums. And a little later, as they comprehended that the white men were going to lead them toward those drums, the natives changed in the twinkling of an eye.

Their eyes darted about frantically. They moved nervously, and for the moment at least, every man of them except Bumidai was contemplating flight. Bumidai had thought from the first that "he finish," white man's magic or no white man's magic.

NOW was the time, Sinclair knew, to pay off on the status he had so laboriously constructed for himself. It was the old story of the pearling grounds—what a native did at this moment, or had been accustomed to do for months past, had nothing to do with what he might do or feel in the immediate future.

Soothingly, confidently, Sinclair launched into a speech in pidgin. Already they had been promised what was a fortune to a native, if gold were found. Now he would confide in them. He, captain fella, had a more important task for the white man's government. He must capture and bring back to Port Moresby a big white fella—Johnson. If they helped, and he was successful, he'd see to it that, sooner or later, every man could be a village constable in the Papuan Police—the highest and most lucrative status know to a black fella, except that of sergeant.

As he paused, Bumidai took over. In a flood of native gibberish he evidently, according to his gestures, pointed out that they would be killed and eaten, if they ran away. If they stayed, with the aid of the captain fella and the firesticks, they would be safe.

This carried the day. But this Sinclair knew: from now on, at any untoward incident, the black men might melt away to take their chances in the bush.

Sinclair took Bumidai a little apart. Bumidai might not know the local language of the drums, but the explorer's confidence in native clairvoyance was more profound than that of a man who merely follows a hunch, which is part of the same thing.

"Black fella wantum fight?" he asked, gesturing toward the drums which appeared to be hung in the sky directly above them.

"Me no think him black fella savvy fight now. Me think he feel good alonga big kai-kai, maybe."

With that Sinclair had to be content. And two hours later, toiling up a grade so steep that the natives had bent it back on itself in writhing curves, he was marveling at the endurance of the invisible drummers. Perhaps they worked in relays, for the beat and throb of them not only had never stopped, but was increasing in tempo, until he felt that he could see and feel the mounting hysteria of the blacks. His own boys were wild-eyed with the contagion of it.

Then, abruptly, the mountainside flattened out. The jungle grew thinner, and one could see a hundred yards or so ahead. Sinclair silently signaled a halt, and screened himself behind a huge vine-hung casuarina palm and its attendant growths. The others were hidden by the curve in the path.

Thirty yards ahead, peering forward and downward, were nearly a dozen blacks, most of them carrying guns. The roar of the drums had obliterated all warning of the newcomers' approach. And in the precise center, holding binoculars to his eyes, Sinclair was looking at the broad back and snarled yellow hair of Jumbo Johnson.

The shock of it seemed to numb his body into complete lack of feeling. Holding his hand to his lips for silence, he gestured to the boys to stack the supplies in the bush alongside the path. Then, above the frantic roll of the drums rising from that unseen hollow ahead, he gave his orders.

Daubrey's eyes shone from their caverns like two white-hot torches. "Must be quite a show, what?" he whispered. "This is priceless, old boy, really priceless."

With himself in the center, and Daubrey and Bumidai on the ends, the party stole forward in a skirmish line. The drum-beats were now mixed with shrill cries and guttural chanting. No one of Johnson's line of boys sensed their approach, until Sinclair, rifle slung over his shoulder, but two .45s ready to his hands, was within twenty-five feet of his prey.

The drums were dying away from that mad climax, and, the weird chanting was rising in volume, when one of Johnson's natives turned around. His mouth fell open with surprise. Then his face split in a broad grin as he bounded toward Johnson and pulled at his arm.

Every faculty in Sinclair's system was keyed to its highest, and behind the alertness of his mind and muscles was a sort of super-clarity which made everything appear larger, and time slower, so that he could absorb every detail.

He ran forward. Johnson whirled swiftly, but the rifle held loosely in his left hand did not change position. Before Sinclair could say anything, his face lit up with the cold hard radiance of his grin and he thrust out his right hand to Sinclair.

"Am I glad to see you!" he breathed.

Now a couple of Sinclair's boys had recognized coast acquaintances among Johnson's line of carriers. Bumidai and the Dook, however, were as alert as human beings could be.

"Rather glad to run across you, myself," Sinclair said. "Drop your rifle, please."

"Stow the melodrama," snapped Johnson.

Thirty yards ahead were nearly a dozen blacks, most of them carrying guns. And in their precise center was Jumbo Johnson.

"We can wait. Take your hands off those popguns and take a look down there!"

He handed over the binoculars, and Daubrey joined them. Sinclair gestured at Johnson, and Daubrey nodded. His gun was cocked, held at the ready, and pointed at Johnson.

Sinclair took the glasses, and with the rest of his party, crept forward a few feet until he could see down into the wide shallow depression.

SEATED in a long row on the opposite slope was a line of women. Back of them far enough to be onlookers instead of participants were old women, girls, and pickaninnies who were no more naked than their elders. Circling round and round in a circle were the warriors wearing plumed war bonnets, permanently bedraggled in the dank mist of a country where it rained every day in the year, and all the time during the rainy season. Both men and women were of small stature and unutterably ugly. In the center of the warriors two horrendous objects, at least fifteen feet high, moved in a slow, macabre dance, holding each other by the arms.

Their bases were two aged bodies, the bones outlined in white pipeclay. On the shoulders of each was set the towering masks made of palm fronds laced over a framework of split bamboo. Similar contrivances, Sinclair knew, were known as taboo goblins among some of the coastal tribes, and were the objects of much fear

and awe. They were topped by snarling painted masks—the faces of two of the tribal gods. One, it appeared, was that of a female, and the other unmistakably male.

On the crest of the opposite hillside were dozens of crude little huts, each built on stilts and with only a small round hole for its single entrance. Halfway down the slope was a single small structure, open on the side facing the natural amphitheater but walled with mud on the other three.

Huddled on its platform, legs and arms bound loosely with sturdy vines, was a single figure, arms locked around knees and face hidden against the arms. It was partially covered with tattered remnants of clothing of the color of the damp earth. As though sensing strangers, the captive's head raised up a little—very slowly, as though the gesture required the last remnant of strength.

Sinclair's arms moved with equal deliberation as he removed the binoculars from his eyes. No matter, how long he might live or what crisis might be awaiting him, none would have the potentialities with which he was faced now.

Alongside him was his enemy, at the head of an army larger and more loyal than his own—as alert and aware of all the issues as Sinclair himself, and with twice the know-how. Behind him was Daubrey, and four blacks who might desert to Johnson, or into the bush, at any moment. Downriver was Sykes, who, like Daubrey, would drop Sinclair overboard for Johnson, or merely for himself, at the hint of any extra profit which might accrue. And surrounding him for hundreds of miles, forced temporarily into the background because of the menace closer by, were hundreds of thousands of blacks.

And in that squalid hut was the final factor, at once simplifying and complicating an already fantastic situation. Huddled there, filthy, half-naked, and possibly sick unto death—climax to the dank and dripping horror of a land and a people out of a nightmare—was Sandra Hope.

(To be concluded)

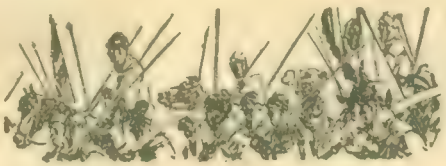
THE TRAIL AHEAD

You've seen mighty little factual material in print about our submarine operations against the Japs in the Pacific. There's a reason for it—"security"—but now, with Nip war and merchant vessels dying score on score from torpedo wounds inflicted by our submariners, official restrictions have been raised to some extent. The Navy tells us we may now publish a piece we've been wanting to let you read for a good many months—

"GARBAGE—TO GOLD—TO GLORY"

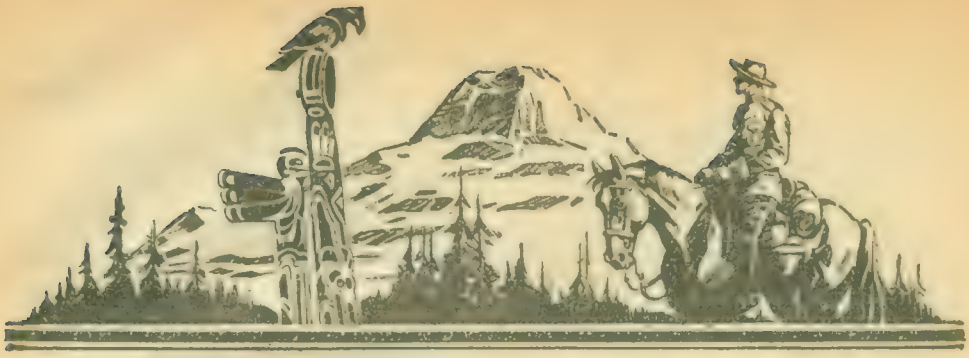
By MAXWELL HAWKINS

It's a chapter from Mr. Hawkins' book—"Torpedoes Away, Sir"—to be published shortly. The thrilling excerpt we give you tells the story of Mike Fenno's sub that started out one morning from Midway to dump a load of refuse, caught the flash that Pearl had been attacked, proceeded as an ammo cargo-carrier to besieged Corregidor, and returned to Pearl, after sinking a couple of Jap ships, with a king's ransom of gold and silver bullion for ballast.



Henry John Colyton, in "The Pilgrim and the Pirate," marches us at the heels of Godfrey and Tancred and Robert of Normandy along the dusty road from Beirut to Jerusalem, following the Cross of the Crusade, in the first installment of a gripping two-part tale. . . . Gordon MacCreagh takes us to Massaua on the Red Sea to hear a military court decree a "Death Penalty" for Sergeant Timothy Hogan, "charged with diverting to his own personal use twenty-one thousand gallons of high-test petrol.". . . Jess Arnold, in an off-the-trail novelette, introduces us to the crew of the Liberator *No Calfrope*, Texans all, and their skipper, Clint Travis, who coddled them with his horn of plenty till the day they died. . . . Robert H. Wall, Jr. in "This Is It," brings back "me and Stinky" whom you met a few issues ago in "Get Off My Back" in another episode in the lives of a couple of GIs sweating it out "down under.". . . Charles Mergendahl hands us a chuckle letting us listen in on a none-such track coach reminisce about "The Best I Ever Had.". . . Plus additional short stories, features, verse and informative departments such as can be found each month only in—

On Sale August 10th



ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

HOW to tan elk hides.

Query:—Can you tell me how to tan some elk hides for leather? Can dried hides be tanned successfully? Do you know any good way to manipulate them after taking out of solution? I am interested only in getting serviceable leather.

—M. O. Pewitt,
Box 176
Alder, Mont.

Reply by Raymond S. Spears:—Your best bet for tanning elk hides is get the Home Tanning of Hides, one of the farm-bulletins issued by the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. This will tell you the several best home methods of curing skins.

Your elk skins, green or dry, will make fine leather, especially if they are late-killed.

The summer skins are thick and spongy, and the leather they make is poor stuff, compared to the thin, tough winter skins, which are strong and long wearing. Summer skin moccasins last only two or three weeks wear, but thin winter skins last for months on snowshoes (moose, elk, caribou, etc.).

There are a lot of different kinds of leathers—oak tan is the old standby. You soak the skin in lime-water, or in luke warm water till the hair slips. Then you grain the hair out over a log end using the back of a draw-shave, say. This gives you rawhide.

If you have oaks, skin the bark off to the sapwood, and soak this in water (break it up fine) and put a hide into it. This will give you an oak tan in a few weeks—standard old frontier tan. When the tannin is soaked all through the skin, it is taken out and wrung and twisted till it dries—the wringing softens into pliable skin. The tannery way is to put into a tumbler—a barrel on a shaft and turn it over till the skin is soft. Rubbing neatsfoot oil into the skin is a softener—easier on the hands and arms. Castor oil is one of best softening treatments.

Instead of tanning you can use a tawing. When the rawhide is put into a bath of salt, alum, and borax (equal parts, say ½ lb. of each) with two ounces of saltpetre, and then dissolved in water, the bath gives you a "taw." This makes a fine skin for various uses—a white, instead of red leather, which hemlock, white oak, tannin barks give.

If you have in reach Encyclopedia Britannica, under LEATHER you will find a long list of tans, alums, chromes, etc., treatments. The SUMACH shrubs (look out for poison kinds) are used in tanning. Leaves make a strong tanning solution—also sap-wood bark—best kind of tanning is done with sumach leaves in practically a mush with water. Soaked for weeks—a month or less. This makes a pale, "light" leather—actually tanned takes 24 hours in tannery, but process leading up to it is a long treatment.

Asking for the Dept. of Agriculture bulletin, ask especially about SUMACH taning methods, oak bark, chrome and other treatments. Sheep, goat, calf skin methods for the elk. Indians worked elk and other animal brains into dehaired skins with smudge smoke—no better leather made.

HISTORIC details of the Sharps breech-loader.

Query:—I am writing a story laid in California's old time Hangtown (Placerville) in which I have a character using a Sharps rifle. The date is 1854. I would like my description of the gun to be authentic; thus in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol.

(Continued on page 137)

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

Notice: Many of our *Ask Adventure* experts are now engaged in government service of one kind or another. Some are on active duty in the Army or Navy, others serving in an executive or advisory capacity on various of the boards and offices which have been set up to hasten the nation's war effort. Almost without exception these men have consented to remain on our staff, carry on their work for the magazine if humanly possible, but with the understanding that for the duration such work is of secondary importance to their official duties. This is as it should be, so when you don't receive answers to queries as promptly as you have in the past, please be patient. And remember that foreign mails are slow and uncertain these days, many curtailed drastically. Bear with us and we'll continue to try to serve you as speedily as possible.

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing: *Paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 1325 So. Main St., Princeton, Ill.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *Fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting, Tournament—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Health-Building Activities. Hiking — DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure.*

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, care of *Adventure.*

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—ROBERT WHITE, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *Foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign: Wing Shooting and Field Trails—ROY S. TINNEY, care of *Adventure.*

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—MAJOR R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure.*

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 6720 Jeffery Ave., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure.*

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America. Outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

Ornithology: *Birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure*.

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*.

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESEBERG, care of *Adventure*.

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 156 Joralemon St., Belleville, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

Federal Investigation Activities: *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

The Merchant Marine—GORDON MACALLISTER, care of *Adventure*.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—ALEC CAVADAS, King Edward High School, Vancouver, B. C.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

U. S. Marine Corps—LIEUT. COL. F. W. HOPKINS, care of *Adventure*.

U. S. Navy—LIEUTENANT DURAND KIEFER, care of *Adventure*.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★**New Guinea**—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure*.

★**New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa**—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★**Australia and Tasmania**—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★**South Sea Islands**—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., Manley N. S. W., Australia.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya—GORDON MACCREAGH, 2231 W. Harbor Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban, Natal, So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDLE, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

Europe, Part 1—*Denmark, Germany, Scandinavia*—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Central America—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure*.

South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure*.

★**West Indies**—JOHN B. LEEFINGWELL, Box 1333, Nueva Gerona, Isle of Pines, Cuba.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, care of *Adventure*.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** *Quintana Roo, Yucatan Campeche*—CAPTAIN W. RUSSELL SHEETS, care of *Adventure*.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **3** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, *The Courier Advocate*, Trenton Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping*—A. D. L. ROBINSON, 103 Wembly Rd. (Forest Hill), Toronto, Ont., Canada. **5** ★*Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta*—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C. **6** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501—10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask.

Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1211 W. Roma Ave., Albuquerque, N. M. **4** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGGLESTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev. **5** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **6** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, care of *Adventure*. **7** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River*—GEO. A. ZERR, 31 Cannon St., Pittsburgh, 5, Penna. **3** *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, 40 Chapel St., Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*. **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

(Continued from page 134)

25, p. 102 under "Small Arms" I find this paragraph:

"In America, the opening of the West produced a demand for a breech-loaded weapon suitable for mounted hunting and combat. The shorter heavier 'buffalo gun', calibre .40 to .60 inches, was the result. The Sharps rifle of 1850 is typical. It had a vertically sliding breechblock, pierced by a flash hole, carrying a nipple on the rear end to hold a percussion cap. The breechblock was slid downward, using the trigger guard as a lever, and a paper cartridge, containing a conical bullet and a powder charge, was inserted from the rear. When the block was closed, it sheared the base of the cartridge and exposed the powder to the flame through the flash hole."

This source mentions that the gun used a paper cartridge. My questions are these: What color might those cartridges have been? Would it be safe to assume they were red or yellow as are our present day shotgun cartridges? And after the gun was fired, would this cartridge (1) be ejected mechanically as in present day guns? or (2) have to be removed by hand? or (3) being paper, be burned out in the firing? If the paper was thin enough to be sheared off by the closing of the block as mentioned in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, I am inclined to assume that it would probably burn out with the firing. Is this correct?

—James N. Algar,
5247 Vantage Ave.,
North Hollywood, Calif.

Reply by Donegan Wiggins:—I cannot recall ever seeing, at least knowingly, one of the original Sharp, combustible cartridges, the sort loaded in the breech, and used with a percussion cap.

I understand, however, that they were made of a rather lightweight paper, very tough in texture, and of a light color, something like gray, and were impregnated with some compound that insured their being completely burned by the heat of the burning powder charge when fired, thus leaving the breech of the barrel—the chamber in other words—so free of debris from that shot, that there was no difficulty in loading for the succeeding ones.

I own one, a carbine, and while it COULD be loaded and fired, I have never made the attempt, as they leak fire at the breech very heavily. This last statement is one I had from men who used them in the Civil War. A great number were altered after the war to .50-70 breechloaders, using the standard centerfire metallic ammunition, and were very serviceable arms; I own and have fired both rifle and carbine of this type. Saterlee states that some were also made in .52 caliber.

We believe some were made in 1846, and used in the Mexican War. John Brown used the Sharps such as you describe, at Osawattomie, and Harpers Ferry, and his last surviving son told me of the Kansas fighting, ere his death some years since.

For about as good a description of Sharps as one can get, as well as Winchesters, pictures, history, patent dates, I recommend Sawyer's Vol. 3, and Saterlee's "A List of Firearms for the Collector", both of which your public library will have, I am sure.

I visited Placerville in 1940, and when I told the local historians that the three discoverers of the gold, that day in Sutters Mill race, were from Salem, my home town, and that the finder was NOT the man (James W. Marshall) whom California allowed to die of starvation after discontinuing his pension, but Captain Charles Bennett, the Indian fighter, who lies a mile from where I sit, I decided that perhaps I'd better head for the tall timber: the boys were stealing glances at the old bell that hangs in the heart of the town, and that the Vigilantes used to ring when a necktie party was due.

Yes, a cap-and-cartridge Sharps rifle would be within the bounds of possibility, and with a Colt Dragoon to keep it company; they would be right in character there and then.

Five Sharps hang or stand near me now, and there are a few others round about

Can't Keep Grandma In Her Chair

She's as Lively as a Youngster—Now her Backache is better

Many sufferers relieve nagging backache quickly, once they discover that the real cause of their trouble may be tired kidneys.

The kidneys are Nature's chief way of taking the excess acids and waste out of the blood. They help most people pass about 3 pints a day.

When disorder of kidney function permits poisonous matter to remain in your blood, it may cause nagging backache, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder.

Don't wait! Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills, used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from your blood. Get Doan's Pills.

the place; I consider them, and the muzzle-loading Hawken, the greatest of the Western single shot pioneer arms, as the Winchester and Henry team up for the magazine arms. I always believe that the soldier was considerably handicapped with the Springfield breechloader and the Spencer repeater, from what I have read, and my inspection of the weapons. I have specimens of all in my humble collection, you see.

THE map of Africa.

Query:—I am deeply interested in Africa and have in my possession several wall maps of that continent but they aren't very detailed. Can you tell me where to obtain large-scale, detailed maps of the individual countries and colonies in Africa? I have queried commercial map makers and they say they can't help me.

—Spencer L. Winberry,
Tech. Sgt. USMC,
Fort Worth, Texas

Reply by Gordon MacCreagh:—It has been my experience that the maps put out by commercial map publishers, while very nice, are utterly worthless for anything more than general topical information.

The really detailed maps are, of course, military. Pre-war, both Italy and Germany had marvelous maps of African territory about which they ought not to have been interested at all. These could be acquired by a little finagling. Right now anybody found with such a map—other than a military big shot—would be shot as a spy.

Our own Army and Airforces have, in the current war years, prepared probably the finest air-survey maps that the world has ever known. These show even water holes and patches of scrub. Exactly what you—and I—want. But try even to get a look at one, and F.B.I. would come snooping around you the very next day.

Whether our brass hats will release any of this information after the war is anybody's guess. My own guess is that they'll keep it as one of the master secrets for fear somebody might find out where there exists a water hole.

So you'll have to apply to England, where they have never gone hysterical about "Military Secrets" like we have. I don't know whether they will spend the paper at this time; but post-war I'm sure they will open up again. There exists—used to exist—a bureau called, "His Majesty's African Dominions" connected with the office of the Foreign Secretary. This bureau furnished splendid maps of all British-owned Africa, cost about fifty cents each; real detailed material, showing trails, tracks, motorable roads. Probably the war has shut all this activity down for the present. But there is no doubt that the Bureau will reopen post-war; and soon, because its function was to give information to persons considering emigration to the colonies.

Write them, care Foreign Secretary, London, and you will, when war conditions permit, receive courteous attention.

Maps of French Africa used to be issued by the "Bureau de Tourisme," Paris. This, too, probably will begin to function again some day.

I have never seen a good map of Portuguese Mozambique.

THE care and feeding of night crawlers.

Query:—I am one of those amateur fishermen who throws a plug unskilfully for exercise but catches his fish on "crawlers." So far I have had no luck keeping the night crawlers. They stink, rot and die—in about that order. Given a standard wooden nail keg, how many can I keep in it? What kind or kinds of dirt should I use? How dry or wet should I keep it? What about food if I want to keep 'em more than a few days?

—Capt. George H. Morrill, F.A.
3684 S. U. (ROTC)
Beloit, Wisconsin

Reply by John Alden Knight:—The logical way to keep night crawlers is to reproduce, as closely as possible, the conditions under which they live. You won't be able to keep any quantity of them very long in a nail keg.

Instead, use a wide, flat box, say 3' by 4' with 12" sides. Bore holes in the bottom boards (small ones so you don't lose your crawlers) for drainage. Fill the box with a mixture of the loam in which you find your crawlers and an ample supply of grass sod, roots and all. Mix in some leaves for additional food—doesn't matter much what sort—and keep the box in a shady place, reasonably cool. Don't soak the thing with water; just keep it moist. In such a set-up, you should be able to keep 100 crawlers alive and happy indefinitely.

Some men keep them in moss with a mixture of sand for "scouring," feeding them every day or so with milk. Others use soft loam and sod with a covering of damp burlap. By and large, however, the closer you can come to natural conditions, the better luck you should have.

As to food—crawlers are vegetarians, living on grass roots and dead leaves for the most part. The set-up given above will take care of the food angle. It is a good idea to renew the mixture of dirt and sod every now and then.

A BOW and arrow is no plaything.

Query:—The other night after a meeting of our Marine Corps League Detachment, we were talking about hunting and I opened my big mouth and started to talk about archery.

I made a statement that I had read in some magazine that a woman, I believe her name was Mrs. Chas. A. Johnson, had shot a deer with an arrow, the arrow passing clear through the deer, falling to the ground on the other side.

(Continued on page 145)

(Continued from page 8)

FOUR additions to the ranks of our Writers' Brigade this month—a brace of fictioneers and a pair of fact-feature writers. We'll let them introduce themselves in the order they appear on the contents page.

Norman Flander, who adds—in "Powder Man" on page 43—to the dynamite lore we've published in past years by Hudson Maxim, Harry Botsford and others, writes us succinctly—

> About myself, short and sweet.
>
> When, at the age of twelve, my stepfather gave me a beating with a horse whip, I promised to return the favor at a later date, ran off to northern Alberta and arrived there with twenty cents in my pocket, thirty below, four feet of snow. I knew no one within a thousand miles. Punched cattle and broke horses for an English remittance man, went with a Canadian government survey party into the Peace River valley, gone two years from civilization, dog sled, boat and snowshoe. Killed my first grizzly. He fell dead thirty feet in front of me after taking five Ross slugs. Bummed my way back to the States. Dug coal, washed dishes, cooked in a lumber camp, did a bit of pro boxing, served as a deputy sheriff, went through the Madero revolution in Mexico and just escaped a Mex firing squad. Trapped in a coal mine once for four days. Water rising and up to our armpits when they dug us out. Joined the Forty-Ninth Canadian Scottish in 1914 and served through till the Armistice. Five wounds, four medals and a whiskery kiss from Marshall Foch. Lived a more or less quiet life ever since except for the time I walked up on a drunken man armed with a shotgun who was going to shoot his wife and took it away from him. I was unarmed and shook for days afterward.
>
> Now my ambition is to have a small ranch near Monterey and do nothing but write, golf, fish, hunt and listen to my arteries harden.

We can see what the guy means. If we'd crammed all that into our own brief span we'd want to go and do likewise! In fact it sounds like a pretty satisfactory post-war plan even without the busy Flander background.

FRANKLIN GREGORY, whose comic fantasy "Charge of Mayhem" is on page 55, like so many other metropolitan newspapermen, had his first shot of printer's ink "out where the tall corn grows." He says—

> I was born in Iowa Falls, Iowa, in 1905, and attended Grinnell College for two years and the University of Iowa School of Journalism for another two. In between colleges and afterwards I ran through a gamut of sundry jobs: chicken-picker for Swift & Co., sausage-maker for Rath Packing Company, section hand in Kansas, time clerk in Los Angeles, dish washer in Lompoc, California, night clerk for Western Union in El Paso, short order cook (one week, the restaurant went bankrupt), waiter, and police reporter on sundry newspapers. In 1936 I left Billings for Philadelphia to take my present rewrite and general assignment job on *The Record*.
>
> Frustrated in a normal, healthy Iowan's desire for a career as a world traveler, I usually vacation in Mexico and sometimes come back with material for articles or shorts. At present I have a Mexican historical novel in process. But for my three previous books—"The Cipher of Death," "Murder at Four Dot" and "The White Wolf"—the material was strictly derivative.
>
> "Charge of Mayhem" was conceived as one of a series of such yarns as are often told by Philadelphia newspapermen after the first four drinks. The Blue Pencil Club may be loosely identified with that oldest newspaperman's club in the country, the Pen and Pencil.

IT'S not unnatural that Russell E. Smith should have picked one of the heroes of the "Fourth Estate" to write about. The author of "Cossack Correspondent" on page 79 is a newspaperman himself, currently on the editorial staff of the San Diego, California *Union*. He introduces himself thuswise—

> Born in New York City: one of the few "New Yorkers" who were really born there! Parents theatrical folks. Dragged about theaters from Pokamoke, Me. to San Diego, Cal., and from Fernadina, Fla. to Vancouver, Wash. Through childhood, gaining an immeasurable knowledge of dressing rooms, bum hotels and worse railroads, both in America and England, etc. Ran away to sea when long pants arrove; worked my way around the world and also up and down it. Went into show business. Advance agent and took shows around the world, also circuses. Was on the old N. Y. *World* as feature writer on the Metropolitan Section. Then to the Munsey Co. under Bob Davis as associate editor of all the Munsey magazines—ten at the time. Then to the movies as writer and editor and director. Then to the First World War and through same; then back to newspaper work in Cincinnatti, Ohio and San Antonio, Tex. Some advertising copy work and publicity and directing fund-raising campaigns here and abroad. Worked on newspapers in Far East. Freelanced for magazines; have written something for almost every one of them. Recently been back in newspaper work and writing on the side. Have four books coming out sometime soon if they ever are able to buy any paper to print them on! One is a two-volume work on "Fighting Pamphleteers" and the other "The Mighty

Muckrakers;" also am supposed to do one of the Rivers of America series.

Have written plays, radio scripts, movie scenarios, advertising, novels and biographies.

Incidentally, I used to work for Arthur Hoffman when he had the *Green Book* in Chicago before he edited *Adventure*.

GIFF CHESHIRE, who gives us "One In a Thousand" on page 102, knows the Columbia River and the locks that bypass it from personal experience. About the story's background and his own he writes—

On the Columbia, just above The Dalles, Oregon, there is a nine-mile stretch of rock-studded rapids, where it is said that the broad river turns on its side. In the colorful days of steamboating, here was one of the two big Columbia portages, glutted with men, equipment and merchandise bound for the lush gold fields in the interior. Now it is circumvented by a canal and three big sets of locks, and the river traffic is comprised almost entirely of big Diesel tugs nosing oil barges.

One of the squares in my checkered past lays over this area. A long time employee of the U. S. Army Engineers, I was stationed at this government canal for a period of four years, where it was our business to lock traffic up and lock it down, interminably.

The incident on which "One in a Thousand" is based was much more tragic than in the story. A barge, without its attendant tug, did break loose at the upper end of the canal and cavort its wild-elephant way down through the rocks and rapids of the main channel. With no Steve Sandesty to restrain them, two deckhands caught aboard tried to swim for it and were drowned. The barge ended up on a rock. As it turned out, the two might have lived had they kept their heads and ridden it out.

Other squares in the aforementioned past cover a hitch in the U. S. Navy, from 1926 to 1930, which interrupted an academic career at Oregon State. During most of this hitch I was assigned to the U. S. Marines and went with them when they put down the Sandino insurrection in Nicaragua. World War II by no means introduced the leathernecks to jungle war.

After that I worked a couple of years in a bank, got an overdose of unemployment during the Big Depression, and wound up with the Army Engineers and stayed put until I turned free-lance writer.

In one way or another I have been in direct contact with all the various western backgrounds I use in fiction. I was born and grew up on a diversified ranch. The little village that bears the family name was the terminal for a wagon freighting outfit and a stopping point for a mudwagon stage. My first job was as water boy on a railroad construction project. During school vacations I worked in sawmills, logging camps and on harvest outfits. My father simultaneously ran a ranch, a general mercantile, and a construction contracting business. One grandfather came across the plains in a Conestoga, another worked West through the gold fields of Colorado, Nevada, northern California and Southern Oregon.

I turned writer out of a clear sky. A couple of years ago a serious illness forced me into a long spell of idleness. Though as lazy as they come, I couldn't stand that very long. I began toying with my typewriter, connected with an agent. After currying me carefully a few times, he began to sell my stuff. We've been at it ever since. . . .

THE following communication from an old-timer who recalls hearing tall tales of the oil fields from the lips of Gib Morgan himself, raises the question of what that fabulous fibber's first name really was. A. W. Meeks of Lima, Ohio writes—

I was reading in your issue of December, 1944 about "Oil Field Liar." I knew Gideon Morgan (not Gib—it's Gid). He came to Lima in 1896 or '97 from Oil City, Pa. I listened to him tell his stories one day in the Sherman House Hotel. We were in the hotel dining room and it was full of oil men; drillers and tool dressers. We never referred to Gid as a liar. Just a man with a vivid imagination, a good entertainer and a good fellow. In those days calling a man a liar would start fighting.

Well, your account of his West Virginia operation was all right except when he went to case the well he knew just how much it would take so he ordered it. He put the right amount in but it wasn't enough so he ordered more. He put that in. Still not enough so he ordered more. They started to put that in and Gid went squirrel hunting down the mountain. He came to a coal mine tunnel. The miners were taking off the casing as fast as the boys put it on!

I forgot to tell you, everybody that came to Gid's turn-table hotel in Texas wanted jack rabbit. Gid hired some hunters to kill rabbits for him, but they wasted so much ammunition that it did not pay. So he went to Missouri and loaded 2 cars full of boulders, scattered them on the plains, then put pepper and snuff on them. The rabbits would smell the stones and sneeze, then they would beat their brains out and he always had plenty of rabbits.

Mr. Meeks goes on to summarize briefly various additional Morgan myths and winds up by asking why we don't print them as well as "The Driller's Dream" which Morgan and his sister wrote and which begins—

Last night I had a dream—
I'd better say a vision—
I dreamed I was a driller

And my time had come to die.
And if you listen, boys,
I'll tell you of my journey through the sky.

We passed Mr. Meeks letter along to Mody C. Boatright, who compiled the Morgan "lies" we've been printing from time to time, for answer and comment. Here's his reply—

Dear Mr. Meeks:

I just received a copy of your letter to *Adventure* about an oil field liar who wasn't really a liar but a poet. I am very happy to hear from anybody who knew Morgan. I have talked to and corresponded with many who knew him.

You old-timers do not seem to be able to agree upon his name. Some of you call him Gid, some Gib, and some Gil. I have seen his signature on several documents in the National Archives and on an autographed portrait. In each case he signed his name Gilbert Morgan. He has a granddaughter living in Butler, Pennsylvania, whom I have seen. She says that the family always called him Gib. But I have seen both Gid and Gideon in print.

Another thing that you old-timers do not agree on is who wrote "The Driller's Dream." Morgan used to recite it, and some believe, as you do, that he and his sister wrote it. Ed Nason, who gave me some information about Morgan and some of the tales he told, thinks that it was written by his father, Charley Nason. Others say that it was written by Ella Hanrahan, who used to run a boarding house for oil field workers. I have the poem, all 77 stanzas. I'll send you a copy if you would like to have it.

Morgan was a truthful man, but I think he must have lied to you about the game served in his Texas hotel. We don't eat jack rabbits in Texas.

Yours sincerely,
Mody C. Boatright.

We have asked Professor Boatright to send us a copy of the poem and while we won't guarantee to print all seventy-seven stanzas maybe we can publish enough excerpts to give you the flavor. Some of the stories Mr. Meeks asks us to print are already in our files and will appear before long. Of course there is nothing derogatory in our characterization of Gib as a liar. Quite the contrary. It's an accolade and we only wish we could manufacture whoppers of sufficient magnitude to deserve it!

—K. S. W.

Get More Kick Out of Life

New Scientific Book Tells "HOW TO RELAX..."

FREE!

Would you like to conquer fear, trouble and worry? Not by a miracle, but by your own common sense, under the guidance of an eminent professor of psychology. This book, "How To Relax" is not an ad; for only men of science could have written it. Yet, it is done with a light, humorous touch. It explains you to yourself: how to "type" your own personality; how to learn which form of relaxation — which hobby, sport or game best fits your "type". This book is not only written for the millions of people who have owned a Buck Skein Joe, but for all, everywhere—it's yours for the asking.

Styled by BUCK SKEIN JOE

Whether or not you own a Buck Skein Joe wool shirt, I want to send you this great book. FREE ➡ Mail Coupon. No obligation.

Buck Skein Joe

Buck Skein Joe, Lustberg-Nast & Co., Inc.
212 Fifth Ave., Dept. R6, New York 10, N. Y.
I want to Relax. Send illustrated book FREE. ☐

Name_____

Address_____

RATIONED MOTORISTS

Now Get *EXTRA* GASOLINE MILEAGE

Now you can get up to 30% extra gasoline mileage with a Vacu-matic on your car. Quicker pick-up, smoother running, added power and precious gasoline savings guaranteed.

Automatic Supercharge Principle

Vacu-matic is entirely different! Operates on the Supercharge principle. Saves gas. Automatically provides a better gas mixture. Guaranteed to give up to 30% extra gas mileage, more power and better performance.

FITS ALL CARS

Constructed of six parts, formed into a single unit. Adjusted and sealed at the factory. Very quickly installed by anyone.

AGENTS TRIAL OFFER

Every car, truck, tractor a prospect. Send name address on postcard for big money making offer and how you get yours for introducing.

Vacu-matic Co., 7617-1221 W. State St., Wauwatosa 13, Wis.

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

"The Aristocrat of Liqueurs"

You and your guests deserve the best—so serve FORBIDDEN FRUIT with pride—before dinner—after dinner—anytime. 70 proof

"GIFT OF THE GODS"

MADE BY CHARLES JACQUIN et Cie., Inc. ★ PHILA., PA.
MAKERS OF QUALITY CORDIALS SINCE 1884

FREE BOOK for HORSEMEN

Learn to break Colts; gait show horses; train stock horses; teach circus tricks. COMPLETE, PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION. Doctor Book FREE! Write ANIMAL LOVERS ASSOCIATION 0111 TARZANA, CAL.

REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING SERVICE MECHANICS COURSE

Learn at home—how to start your own repair shop on little capital. No previous experience needed. Common school education sufficient. Splendid opportunity for older men. Prepare now for after the war. FREE illustrated booklet.

MECHANICS TRAINING SCHOOL
4701 W. Pico Dept. R-8 Los Angeles 6, Calif.

High School Course at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H.S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a H.S. graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. HC49, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

Watch Crystals You Can't Break

Fit Tight, Dustproof—
Any Size, Any Shape

PROTECT YOUR WATCH

Go to any jeweler—ask for a G-S FLEXO CRYSTAL. 100% BREAKPROOF. Can be fitted while you wait. Guaranteed.
Germanow-Simon Mach. Co., Rochester 1, N.Y.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

I wonder if anyone can help locate a buddy of mine, Sidney A. Levinson, whose home before the war was Yonkers, N. Y. He enlisted on Nov. 14, 1941 and served with me in Australia. He was sent back to the States and from what I can gather was discharged because of disability. I do not have his home address in Yonkers but since he expressed a desire to see the U.S. he may be traveling anywhere in the country. Please write Pvt. George N. Raybin, 12035917, Co. A-62 MTB, Camp Crowder, Mo.

Anyone knowing the children or grandchildren or other kin of my father, Orlando Gregory, please write Ira Gregory, 1715 L St., Bakersfield, Calif.

Anyone knowing anything of the whereabouts of Pvt. Robert William Anderson, 28th Bombardment Squadron, Fort Stotensburg, Manila. Last heard of at Bataan. Please write William J. Sponsler, 18136 Parkmount Ave., Cleveland 11, Ohio.

Rube Smith, 968 Neilson St., Albany 6, Calif., wants to get in touch with his old friend William J. Smith of Walla Walla, Wash. Bill Smith was born in Montesano, Wash.

Fred Hebron of 6216 S. Oakes St., Tacoma 9, Wash., or anyone knowing his whereabouts, please write his father H. M. Hebron, same address. Fred disappeared from Tacoma April 9, 1945. He may have tried to enlist in one of the services. Though only 15 he was big for his age, 5 feet 6, wt. 160. He has a brother Sam in the Marine Corps.

Captain Rudolph Petersen who used to write sea stories formerly lived at Locust Street, 133 Street, Bronx, New York City, N.Y. Last heard from in 1940. Anyone knowing his present address please communicate with Norman Gilmartin, c/o General Delivery, Brooklyn General Postoffice, Brooklyn, N. Y.

I would like to hear from Albert "Shorty" Armstrong, and "Butsy" Butterfield, who were members of the 13th U.S. Infantry Band in 1924 at Fort Warren, Mass. Also Philip Smith, Jr., who lived on Gainsborough St., Boston in 1941. I have recently been discharged from Army Air Force and would like to hear from some of the old buddies of the old days. John J. Delaney, 227 Broadway, Cambridge 39, Mass.

Alex "Scotty" Mackie, age 34, weight 125, height 5'3", blue eyes, dark brown hair, missing since 1939. Last heard from in Cleveland, Ohio. Anyone knowing of his recent whereabouts please communicate with his brother, Robert Mackie, 3774 Highland Road, Cleveland 11, Ohio.

PFC George Allen Agogino, DET-H 997 Sig. Ser. Bn., APO 503 c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, Cal. wants to get in touch with Larence Griswold who wrote a book, "Tombs, Travels and Trouble." He also would like the name of the aviator who flew with Mr. Wallace Hope for the rebels in the Mexican uprising of 1928-29.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Max Franck, formerly of 442 S St., N.W., Washington, D.C.; Meyer Harwich, formerly of 13 Acchery Ter., Leeds, Eng.; or Phil Jaffe, a former printer of Cleveland, Ohio, now a rabbi, please communicate with Julius Bobinsky, 4701 N. St. Louis Ave., Apt. 11, Chicago, Ill.

R. Welker, 219-48th St., Union City, N. J. wants to hear from "Blackie" Fredericks, former crew member of the S. S. *President Roosevelt.*

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of John S. Peebles, Jr. please write J. S. Peebles, White Cloud, Michigan, RFD#2. His parents have considered him dead but have lately heard that he is still alive and they have been unable to obtain his address.

Bill Arenz, who left Jacksonville, Ill., in 1940. I am married to your daugher, Helen, and would like to meet or hear from you. E. D. Meany, 407 Highland Ave., Palisade Park, N. J.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Herbert A. Roig—forty-three years old, five feet ten inches tall, weighs a hundred and fifty pounds, gray eyes, brown hair, last heard of in 1939 in Houston, Texas—please communicate with his friend Frank Landon, 1146 Webster St., San Francisco 15, Calif.

If anybody has any information regarding Luther (Red) Wright, who some years ago lived in Independence, Mo., and later moved to Joplin, Mo., would they please get in touch with Pfc. Elvin Clyde Hancock, Jr., USMC, MDNAS, Hitchcock, Texas. Wright was a close friend of my father's and I would like to find out about his son, who is about the same age as myself and was a friend of mine.

Swing to Saraka ... and Feel New

Let Saraka help you to greater regularity

If you are troubled with constipation, swing to Saraka. Start the day fresh as a daisy, with that "new" feeling.

Saraka contains two important ingredients. The first supplies the soft, smooth bulk your system needs, and often lacks. The second supplies gentle, yet thorough action that results in easy elimination.

It's a two-fold balanced action; *Bulk Plus Motility.*

For this reason doctors recommend Saraka.

You can buy Saraka at your favorite drug counter. Or, if you'd first like a sample, mail in the coupon for a free, trial-size package. But whichever you do, do it today.

Caution: Use only as directed

SARAKA, Dept. 336, Bloomfield, N. J.
Without obligation on my part please send free package of SARAKA.

Name_____

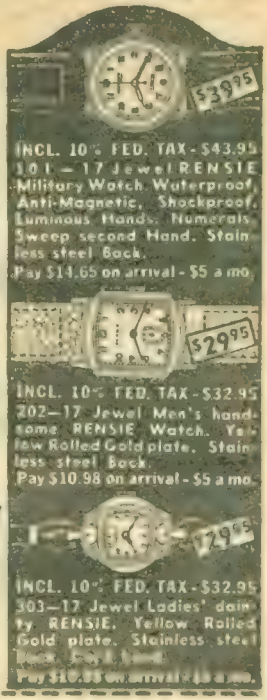
Address_____

City_____ State_____

© 1945, Union Pharmaceutical Co., Inc.

Tappin's AMAZING RENSIE WATCH VALUES

Your choice of these Nationally Advertised beautiful RENSIE Watches for examination and 15 day Trial! Send no money . . . simply indicate your choice on coupon below giving number and price, and a brief note telling who you are, occupation, age, draft status, etc. We will send your selection by express for examination. If satisfied, pay the Expressman 1/3 down payment, (required by Federal Regulations). Pay balance at rate of $5 per month.


$39.95
INCL. 10% FED. TAX - $43.95
101—17 Jewel RENSIE Military Watch. Waterproof, Anti-Magnetic, Shockproof. Luminous Hands, Numerals. Sweep second Hand. Stainless steel Back.
Pay $14.65 on arrival - $5 a mo.
$29.95
INCL. 10% FED. TAX - $32.95
202—17 Jewel Men's handsome RENSIE Watch. Yellow Rolled Gold plate. Stainless steel Back.
Pay $10.98 on arrival - $5 a mo.
$29.95
INCL. 10% FED. TAX - $32.95
303—17 Jewel Ladies' dainty RENSIE. Yellow Rolled Gold plate. Stainless steel

Your JEWELRY BARGAIN BOOK Free

Tappin's JEWELERS, INC.

Tappins' Jewelers, Inc.
Dept. P-81, 823 Broad Street, Newark, N. J.

Send me No.....Price.....After examination, I agree to pay $.....and $5 monthly thereafter 'till full price is paid. Otherwise I'll return selection within 15 days and you will refund my money.

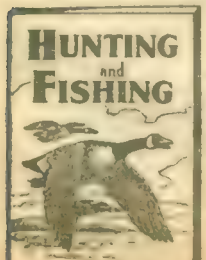
Name .....

Address .....

City .....State .....

PLASTICS
TRAINED MEN NEEDED IN NEW, ESSENTIAL INDUSTRY

Plastics, those new materials already indispensable in war production are creating unlimited opportunities for tomorrow. Learn how you can train at home, in spare time, to enter this great new field. Write for FREE BULLETIN. No obligation.
AMERICAN SCHOOL
Dept. PC49 Drexel at 58th St. Chicago 37, Ill.



HUNTING & FISHING

is a monthly magazine crammed full of hunting, fishing, camping, dog and boating stories and pictures, invaluable information about guns, fishing tackle, game law changes, best places to fish and hunt—countless ideas that will add more fun to your days afield.

Special Trial Offer

Send 25c in stamps or coin and we will send you Hunting & Fishing for six months.

HUNTING & FISHING
MAGAZINE, 250 Sportsman's Bldg., Boston, Mass.

"Captain" Wood Briggs was last heard of in 1924 when he was a lecturer on the Elliott White Chautaqua Circuit. He lived then at 6205 Geary St., San Francisco, Calif. Anyone knowing his present whereabouts please write Jack Bowman, P. O. Box 431, Little Rock, Ark.

Would like to hear from Bill Daly from El Paso, Texas. He is a salesman of automobiles and automobile parts. Very important. J. L. Hobson, 633½ West 85 St., Los Angeles 44, Calif.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Louis Dworak, born July 26, 1919 in Meriden, Conn., left home in Paterson, N. J., in August 1938. Last heard from in Chicago heading West. Had worked in rodeo which went bankrupt in Miami, Fla. Christmas of 1937. Please notify Joseph J. Dworak Cox, Fire Dept. B, Camp Peary, Va.

William J. Smith, age 51 years, light blue eyes, dark brown hair, height 6 ft., last heard of in State of Washington. He was born in Montesano, Wash., and spent school days in Grants Pass, Ore. Anyone knowing his whereabouts please communicate with his brother-in-law, C. E. Baker, 968 Neilson St., Berkeley 6, Calif.

Any information as to the whereabouts of Rochus Cofer of Smithfield, Va., last heard of eleven years ago, will be appreciated by his brother, John M. Cofer, 124 N. North Carolina Ave., Atlantic City, N. J.

Albert R. Gately—the best pal I ever had—was last heard from in Missouri. I would like to locate him. Anyone knowing his whereabouts write Morton A. Richard, 1213 N. 24th St., Phoenix, Ariz.

Max Kennison Todd, please communicate with your grandson, Donald Todd, Rt. 13, Box 781 A, Houston, Texas.

Would appreciate any information regarding James Eischeid, native of Iowa. He is my father and have not heard from him for more than 15 years. He has mechanical engineering training and is also interested in aviation. Also has a decided lust for travel. Any clue to his whereabouts would be of great value to me. Please address any information to Cpl. E. D. Eischeid, USMC, H & S Btry.-9th Def. Bn-F.M.F. c/o The Fleet Postoffice, San Francisco, Calif.

Persons named Page from Sagrada, Camden Co., Mo., or relatives of William or Sanford Brown or any Nelsons from Seligman, Barry Co., Mo., are requested to write George E. Page, Gen. Del., Brawley, Calif.

(Continued from page 138)

Was my statement true? If so, has this been done by others, too, or is it the only case of its kind, where the arrow passed through a deer?

If you have ever tried to make a marine believe something without showing him, you will understand my position. No one believes me, so I hope you can either set me or them right.

—George J. Engelbrecht,
Ex-Sgt. U.S.M.C., 1917 to 1927
535 Somerset St.,
N. Plainfield, N. J.

Reply by Earl B. Powell:—In regard to the matter of shooting clear through a deer, will say that it has been done more than once, and vouched for by reliable persons, such as Saxton Pope, etc. Pope relates this in one of his books and I, also, personally did the same thing, shooting at a deer at about 35 yards with a 105 lb. yew bow. The arrow went through the deer and stuck in a bank about 15 yards from him and I thought I had missed him. Later when I found him, I found that the arrow had passed between ribs and cut the heart almost in two. The arrow when retrieved showed no blood to amount to anything—barely damp.

There is nothing so hard to do in this. I have taken the same old trench helmets we wore in the first World War (I was in it) and with reproductions of the old armor piercing heads have riddled the things at 20 paces. I have driven the same points through a soft pine plank 2 inches thick, so that the points protruded.

In 1925, in Florida, I shot an alligator on one of the canals near Hialeah, where he was lying among the reeds and rocks of the canal bank and the arrow went through him and the blade snapped on the rock against which he was lying. This was when I made the *Field & Stream* Release No. 34, with Harold McCracken of that magazine, making the picture of hunting alligators with the bow.

In the Tower of London, there are suits of French armor which show where the arrow went through the breast plate and the points protruded through the back plate—after passing through the man in between the plates. Now I ask you is it unreasonable to think that a deer could be shot entirely through? I have done it!

If I had to take my choice, I would rather be hit with a 30 cal. Springfield rifle than a broadheaded hunting arrow with a two-edged razor sharp blade about an inch and a quarter wide. I would have a far better chance of survival.

A bow and arrow is not a plaything. Rightly made and in the hands of an expert, it is a terrible weapon at short range.

Overnight...

YOU'LL HAVE

SMARTER LOOKING HAIR!

Convince yourself with one application of this famous 3-Way Medicinal Treatment

Phil Regan is one of the many Hollywood stars who use Glover's 3-Way Medicinal Treatment for a quick, easy freshening of scalp and hair. And remember, it's *easy* to apply. Try all three of these famous Glover's preparations today—Glover's original Mange Medicine—GLO-VER Shampoo—Glover's Imperial Hair Dress. Use separately, or in one complete treatment. Ask for the regular sizes at any Drug Store or Drug Counter—or mail the Coupon for all three products in hermetically-sealed bottles, packed in special carton, with useful FREE booklet. "The Scientific Care of Scalp and Hair."

Your Hair will Look Smart with

Glover's

with massage for DAN-DRUFF, ANNOYING SCALP and EXCESSIVE FALLING HAIR.

Guaranteed by Good Housekeeping

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY!

GLOVER'S, 101 W. 31st St., Dept. 9-A-8, New York 1, N. Y.

Send "Complete Trial Application" package in plain wrapper by return mail, containing Glover's Mange Medicine, Glo-Ver Beauty Shampoo and Glover's Imperial Hair Dress, in hermetically-sealed bottles, with informative FREE booklet. I enclose 25c.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....

☐ Sent FREE to members of the Armed Forces on receipt of 10c to cover postage and packing.

DRAFTING

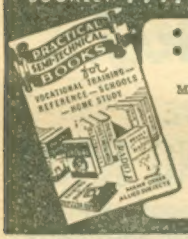
PREPARE NOW FOR A BETTER JOB

Begin *now* to turn spare time into money. Become a draftsman with opportunities for advancement. Be ready to qualify for a good paying job as industry turns to peacetime production. If you are now doing routine drafting work, prepare *now* for promotion to a better job in your field. Send name and address *today* for FREE information.

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. DDC49
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37

Name .....
Street .....
City, State .....

Don't Miss This NEW BOOKLET .... **IT'S FREE!**



- Woodworkers • Machinists
- Artists • Painters • Hobbyists

Tips on How to Get Ahead

Make your time worth real money. This FREE booklet lists today's best money making craft books. Thousands of ambitious men are earning big money because they took advantage of the tips offered in this FREE booklet. Send for your copy today.

THE GATEWAY BOOK CO.
32 N. State Street, Dept. P.B.8
Chicago 2, Illinois

MECHANICS • HOME STUDY

Step up your own skill with the facts and figures of your trade. Audels Mechanics Guides contain Practical Inside Trade Information in a handy form. Fully Illustrated and Easy to Understand. Highly Endorsed. Check the book you want for 7 days' Free Examination. Send No Money. Nothing to pay postman. ☐ Refrigeration $4 • ☐ Radio $4 ☐ Pumps & Hydraulics $4 • ☐ Machinist $4 • ☐ Diesel $2 ☐ Plumbers $6 • ☐ Shipfitter $1 • ☐ Welders $1 • ☐ Auto $4 ☐ Mathematics $2 • ☐ Electricity $4 • ☐ Carpenters $6 ☐ Marine $4 • ☐ Blueprint $2 • ☐ Sheet Metal $1.
If satisfied you pay only $1 a month until price is paid.

AUDEL, Publishers, 49 W. 23 St., New York 10, N. Y.

PULVEX
FLEA POWDER
Kills fleas
25¢ AND 50¢
100% SATISFACTION
...OR MONEY BACK

INVENTORS

Learn now — without obligation — how to protect and sell your invention. Secure "Patent Guide" Free. Write
CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON
Registered Patent Attorneys
526-G Adams Building Washington, D. C.

LAW STUDY AT HOME for PERSONAL SUCCESS and LARGER EARNINGS. 35 years expert instruction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy payments. Send for FREE BOOK "Law and Executive Guidance"—NOW!
AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW
Dept. 56-B, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.

RAILROAD MAGAZINE

—is the perfect gift for railroad men and armchair engineers alike. Nearly 2000 pages of reading and picture enjoyment in a $2.50 year's subscription. Address RAILROAD MAGAZINE at—
205 E. 42nd Street, New York City 17

(Continued from page 42)

Shad's hands and went running to the house, saying, "Praise the Lord!" And everybody started talking at once and following her. All except me and Terminus Gooch.

Terminus stood there watching his brother Shad hurry off with Salina hanging to one arm and it looked like he aged ten year, right there.

"I knowed about that Spuddy pup," he said, speaking bitter. "I knowed he was a pack rat by nature and used to leaving a knuckle bone or a Mexican gourd or something in a hen's nest when he robbed it. But I never takened the time to think, like Brother Shad!"

I slipped off from the dogs when I went to bury Uncle Wiley's toes the second time. Aunt Dicy had washed them to get shed of that burning snuff and packed them in a fruit jar with plenty of cottonseed in between to keep them from touching and sticking together. I buried them down by the well and dragged a big heavy rock over them that Spuddy couldn't move.

Uncle Wiley's fever had done broke by the time I got back to the house and he was asleep and resting easy. From the rattle coming out of the kitchen, I knowed the folks that'd come to set up with Uncle Wiley were back at the table. I could hear Salina talking happy and getting after Shad Gooch to have another round with the biscuits and middlin' meat—just like there was plenty of it.

Old Nevershed Cole wasn't eating, though. He was still sitting on the front gallery, sawing at the coarse strings of his fiddle and staring out across the ridges with a sad look on his face.

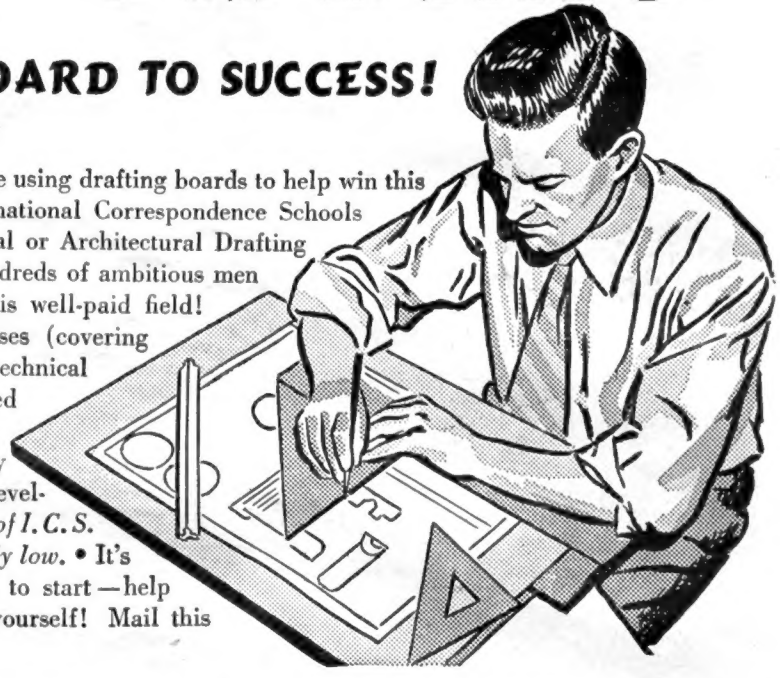
I looked in the direction he was looking and yonder on the first rise went Terminus Gooch, sitting humped in the saddle like it hurt him to ride. His coon-dog, Tater, was following him and old Nevershed's lonesome music was trailing them both, whimpering and crying at their heels.

I stood there and watched them till they got out of sight, wondering what there was about a man with an egg-sucking pup that was better than one with a full growed coon-dog that could pack off a big hog ham, and finally decided there wasn't nobody but a girl fixing to marry who could answer that—and likely she wouldn't.

Before Uncle Wiley got well, the folks that came to set up with him got away with the barrel of flour and a fattening hog, just like Aunt Severance had said. That left the winter rations mighty scant. But with Salina married off, we made out all right. Just like Uncle Wiley had claimed we would.

DRAFTING

SPRINGBOARD TO SUCCESS!



MANY men today are using drafting boards to help win this war! • The International Correspondence Schools Courses in Mechanical or Architectural Drafting have fitted many hundreds of ambitious men for better jobs in this well-paid field! • All I. C. S. Courses (covering 400 business and technical subjects) are prepared by leading *practical* authorities, constantly revised to meet new developments. *Yet the cost of I. C. S. training is surprisingly low.* • It's not too late for *you* to start—help your country, help yourself! Mail this coupon *today!*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

ICS

BOX 3276-U, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X:

Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses
- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Heating ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Refrigeration ☐ Steam Fitting

Chemistry Courses
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Chemistry, Analytical
- ☐ Chemistry, Industrial
- ☐ Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel
- ☐ Petroleum Refining ☐ Plastics
- ☐ Pulp and Paper Making

Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses
- ☐ Architectural Drafting
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
- ☐ Building Estimating
- ☐ Civil Engineering ☐ Coal Mining
- ☐ Contracting and Building
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Lumber Dealer
- ☐ Reading Structural Blueprints
- ☐ Sanitary Engineering
- ☐ Structural Drafting
- ☐ Structural Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping

Electrical Courses
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Power House Electric
- ☐ Practical Electrician
- ☐ Practical Telephony
- ☐ Telegraph Engineering

Internal Combustion Engines Courses
- ☐ Auto Technician ☐ Aviation
- ☐ Diesel-Electric
- ☐ Diesel Engines ☐ Gas Engines

Mechanical Courses
- ☐ Aeronautical Engineering
- ☐ Airplane Drafting
- ☐ Flight Engineer
- ☐ Foundry Work
- ☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
- ☐ Industrial Engineering
- ☐ Industrial Metallurgy
- ☐ Mechanical Drafting
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mold-Loft Work
- ☐ Patternmaking
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Drafting
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Worker
- ☐ Ship Drafting
- ☐ Ship Fitting
- ☐ Shop Practice
- ☐ Steel Mill Workers
- ☐ Tool Designing
- ☐ Welding, Gas and Electric

Radio Courses
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Radio, General
- ☐ Radio Operating
- ☐ Radio Servicing

Railroad Courses
- ☐ Air Brake ☐ Car Inspector
- ☐ Locomotive Engineer
- ☐ Locomotive Fireman
- ☐ Railroad Section Foreman

Steam Engineering Courses
- ☐ Boilermaking
- ☐ Combustion Engineering
- ☐ Engine Running
- ☐ Marine Engineering
- ☐ Steam Electric
- ☐ Steam Engines

Textile Courses
- ☐ Cotton Manufacturing
- ☐ Rayon Weaving
- ☐ Textile Designing
- ☐ Woolen Manufacturing

Business and Academic Courses
- ☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Arithmetic ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Business Correspondence
- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Certified Public Accounting
- ☐ College Preparatory
- ☐ Commercial
- ☐ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Federal Tax
- ☐ First Year College
- ☐ Foremanship
- ☐ French
- ☐ Good English
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Higher Mathematics
- ☐ Illustrating
- ☐ Motor Traffic
- ☐ Postal Service
- ☐ Salesmanship
- ☐ Secretarial
- ☐ Sign Lettering ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Stenography
- ☐ Traffic Management

Name..... *Age*..... *Home Address*.....

City..... *State*..... *Present Position*..... *Working Hours* .....*A.M. to*.....*P.M.*

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.
British residents send coupon to I. C. S., 71 Kingsway, London, W. C. 2, England.

DISCOUNT TO DISCHARGED VETERANS—SPECIAL TUITION RATES FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

ANYONE WHO KNOWS
CAN TELL THE
REAL THING!

...THAT'S WHY
CLEAR HEADS CHOOSE
Calvert

There's never any doubt, among those who know fine whiskey, that Calvert is "the real thing". It has a pre-war quality and excellence that can't be imitated...There's just no substitute for Calvert.

That's why, year in and year out, people who sell and serve Calvert tell us: "It's the whiskey most often asked for by name."

Once you taste this gloriously smooth and mellow blend, *you'll* keep on asking for Calvert, too. It's America's finest whiskey from the House of Blends!

Calvert Distillers Corp., N.Y.C. BLENDED WHISKEY
86.8 Proof. "Reserve": 65% Grain Neutral Spirits..."Special": 72½% Grain Neutral Spirits.

Another scan
by
cape1736